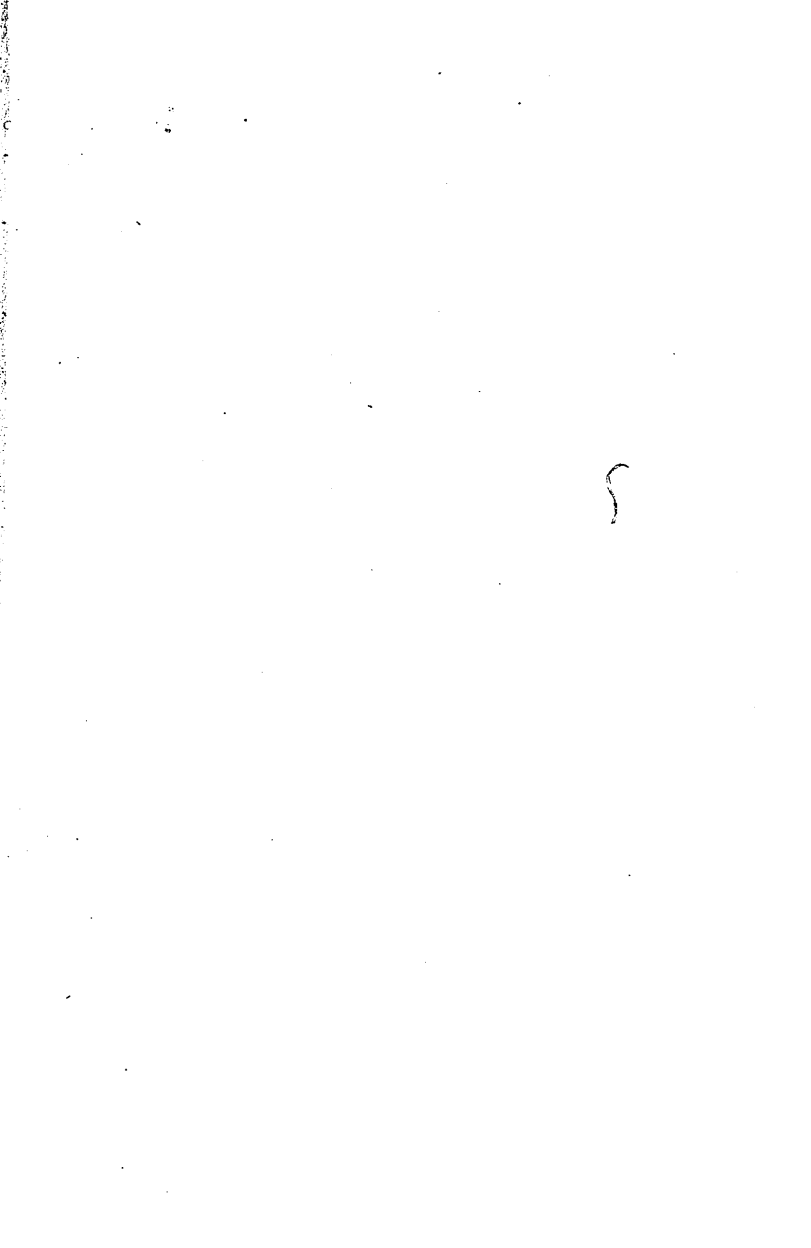


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**THEISM, AGNOSTICISM AND
ATHEISM**

THEISM, AGNOSTICISM AND ATHEISM

By

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TO MY DEAR SON
CHRISTOPHER PAUL
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
BY
HIS FATHER

CHAPTER I

THE CONTEMPORARY SITUATION

THE report of the tribute paid to the late King by the Archbishop of Westminster contains the following passage: "The tone of the late King's mind was sincerely religious. In his public utterances he never failed to call upon God for guidance and strength both for himself and for his people. *He was as fearless in the profession of faith in God as in his attitude towards the difficulties and perils of his high responsibility. Such a manifestation of confidence in God was almost unique in these days.*" This remark struck me as a flash of lightning laying bare the abyss of modern unbelief. In what other age in history would it have required courage in a ruler to profess his faith in God? In what other epoch would it be 'almost unique' to manifest confidence in Divine Providence? History knows of none. The annals of Christendom from Constantine to the nineteenth century have produced many rulers who did not love God, not one who did not believe in Him. Belief in God was common to saintly kings such as Edward the Confessor and wicked kings such as John. The same is true of the Mohammedan world. And in pre-Christian ages, downwards from our earliest records, however inadequate their views of the Deity, the rulers of mankind professed religion. We have only to recall the zeal for

religious worship displayed by the Egyptian Pharaohs or Nebuchadnezzar. It has been reserved for modern times to witness rulers indifferent, often positively hostile, to religion in every form. And this irreligion of governments reflects the irreligion of their subjects.

Throughout the vast territories of Russia a generation is growing up to whom belief in God is the exploded myth of an ignorant past. And if a verbal profession of faith in God survives among the Nazis who are educating the Germans of the future, it is clear that for the majority of their leaders God is but a name, and their true deity is the Nordic race, embodied by National Socialism. Dr. Goebels has told us that he who loves Germany loves God. The Turkish dictatorship, like the Russian, is frankly hostile to religion.¹ And the true religion of Fascist Italy is revealed by the chapel of the Fascist headquarters in Rome, in which the leading object of cultus is not an unobtrusive crucifix on the wall but the prominent image of a deceased Fascist.

And is the situation much better in the Liberal countries? The vast majority in these countries have no religious faith. Even if not convinced and professed atheists, they are avowed or practical agnostics. And of the minority which preserves a sincere belief in God many, perhaps most, have a very hazy notion of what they mean by that profession. They have little understanding of man's fundamental religious attitude towards God, namely worship, the creature's adoration of a Creator to whose free act

¹ Like Russia, Mexico is governed by a persecuting atheism.

he owes his origin and preservation. Divine service is regarded as primarily, if not exclusively, the service of man. Religion has indeed become little, if anything, more than "mortality touched with emotion" which is not religion. That God is the Supreme Reality and prayer by which man is united with God, his highest activity are conceptions which mean nothing. Man is becoming avowedly, or unavowedly, man's sole divinity.

In the introduction to his *Making of Europe* Mr. Dawson has summed up the contrast between the religion of the men who made Europe and their descendants. "*Diem hominis non desideravi* [I have not desired man's day.] That is the essential conviction of the age, and it is one that it is difficult for the modern who views all history *sub specie humanitatis* [from the standpoint of man] to appreciate, since to him 'the day of man' is the only possible object of a reasonable man's devotion." Those, however, who hold this view have no real faith in God. For if God exists, any value existing or produced in, by, or for any creature, man included, must be a gift and participation of God the Absolute Value, and man's happiness proportionate to his performance of God's will.

Nor can this practical unbelief withstand the powerful pseudo-religious faith which inspires such movements as Communism and National Socialism. If God is ignored, or receives at best the formal homage of an occasional prayer or attendance at church, this shadow of religion will vanish on the appearance of a fully-conscious humanism. Only those who know in whom they have believed and with a real, not a merely

notional knowledge, can resist the propaganda, still more the persecution, of those who also know in whom they have believed—in man, not in God.

In face of this irreligious world nothing could be more disastrous than a policy of wilful blindness. If the vast majority, of the younger generation at least, have lost faith in God, the believer must face the fact courageously. If he pretends that the world is still a religious world, or that the English, at any rate, are still a Christian, or even a theistic people, he is unable to be of any religious service to his unbelieving neighbours, for he places himself out of touch with the overwhelming majority of his contemporaries. If he refuses to see their atheism, or more usually agnosticism, he cannot come to grips with it. He must know that they are without religious faith and interest, and why they are without it, and how they regard the position and conduct of religious believers. If he shuts himself up in the chamber of some religious communion and bars the door against the vast world of unbelievers outside, and if contact should be forced upon him turns away in indignant horror, he can do nothing for the cause of religious truth. And he endangers his own religious life by the intellectual dishonesty, however unconscious, which his attitude implies, by the cowardice involved in this seclusion and by his anger at any intrusion upon it. Such a man is half-consciously afraid to bring his religious faith to the test of open conflict with the hosts of unbelief, whose very numbers strike him with dismay and impose a suggestion which, however ir-

rational, is nevertheless powerful, that religion has been finally defeated, has no place in the world of the future, and even where no secularist government hastens the end, can but linger out its inevitable doom. Timidity takes the heart out of religious faith, and is indeed incompatible with it. And it lends colour to the view common among the adversaries of religion that religion is an escape from a reality too unpleasant, a life too difficult to face with open eyes. For this timid religion *is* an escape from the irreligious world, not 'the victorious faith' which overcomes it.

This refusal to face in its full extent contemporary irreligion is widespread. For example, in a letter to *The Times* (February 18, 1936) Lord Hugh Cecil concludes a plea for religious education with the following words: "We want England to escape the infection of less happier lands and *to remain as a people* loyal in our allegiance to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ." The English people can return to, but they cannot remain in, an allegiance long abandoned. I cannot understand how Lord Hugh Cecil has persuaded himself that the British people are, as a body, Christian or even theist. Any serious investigation would show that the vast majority of Britons, far from believing in Christianity, do not believe with any clearness or firm conviction in God. The attitude, all too common, displayed in these words is frankly deplorable. And it is fatal to any prospect of successful religious apologetic. Until he knows the extent to which a disease has spread, a doctor has no hope of effecting a cure.

We must be quite clear that this widespread atheism

and agnosticism, theoretical or practical, is not due to a moral depravity in the contemporary world. As psychology and history prove, moral insight and practice do not advance or decrease with religious insight and practice. For religious insight is one thing, ethical insight another. Ideally, no doubt, all forms of true vision and right practice should advance together. But in the concrete this is not the case. Aesthetic insight, for example, and art may advance while science is stagnant or retrograde. This all would allow. But it is equally certain that moral vision and practice may advance when religious vision is becoming obscured; religious vision may advance when moral vision is dim or even becoming dimmer. For example, there can hardly have been an age in European history in which religion attained greater heights of contemplation and action or was a more powerful factor in human life than in the thirteenth century—the century of St. Francis and St. Dominic, of St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas. Yet this was the age when, for the first time, Canon Law accepted the death penalty as a punishment for heresy and the use of judicial torture which four centuries earlier Pope St. Nicholas had condemned as contrary to Divine Law. Moral insight had diminished in the interval, though religious insight was at the least as profound and as widespread. To-day, on the other hand, when religious knowledge among the civilized white races is confined to a decreasing minority, the tortures of the thirteenth century would not be openly admitted, even in the retrograde totalitarian states of Central and Eastern Europe. And at

least the Western democracies cling to the principle of religious toleration inherited from the Rationalist Aufklärung. Even those moral rules, accepted alike by medieval society and our own, were not in practice more generally obeyed in the Christian past. The evidence does not suggest that in proportion to the population there is more drunkenness, rape, unnatural vice, fraud, violence, oppression of the poor or cruelty to-day than existed when European society was Christian. Indeed, cruelty was more common than it is now. Punishments, prisons, asylums, families and schools; all these, though there is a great need for further improvement, are enormously more humane than when men universally and sincerely professed the faith of Christ. And cruelty to animals, which to-day shocks even the Nazi leaders, was not regarded as a sin. In his attitude to animals the Saint of Assisi stood almost alone. In his attitude to the persecution of heretics he was with the entire Catholic world.¹ Contemporary disbelief is not due to a decline in the moral level nor has it produced such a decline; for, although in certain spheres it is changing moral standards, we must admit, whatever our opinion of these changes, that in many spheres the standard of practice—judged by standards universally accepted, e.g. in the matter of drunkenness, violence, or the treatment of the poor—has risen enormously even within the last half-century.

But when this has been said a most important quali-

¹ St. Francis enjoined that a brother obstinately heretical should be delivered to the ecclesiastical tribunals, whose methods and penalties were not purely spiritual,

fication must be made. There is a more profound morality which is directly religious or intimately connected with religion. It lies below the level of that more external and naturally human morality with which we have so far been concerned. It consists in a fundamental determination of the will towards God and our fellow-men in Him. It is the charity by which we love God "with all our heart and soul and mind and strength" and our neighbour, not as a comrade who shares a common humanity, but as an immortal spirit who shares or is capable of sharing a common supernatural union with God to endure throughout the eternity in which it will be perfected. This charity should indeed produce appropriate moral conduct towards our fellows in every sphere of life and at all levels. But it may and does co-exist, not indeed with personal selfishness in our behaviour towards our neighbour which it destroys in proportion to its growth, but with defective moral views of the way in which our neighbour should with the best of intentions be treated. For example, as Evelyn Underhill has pointed out, the great mystic Ruysbroeck, though incapable of the least personal uncharitableness, accepted from the contemporary moral code the belief that to inflict torture is a judge's duty. And the Curé d'Ars, whose life was an heroic self-sacrifice for souls, saw no evil in an unrestricted and therefore immoral capitalism, which must have counted his poorer parishioners among its victims, and condemned indiscriminately an innocent and beautiful activity, which may be a fine art, namely dancing. But this too frequent maladjustment be-

tween what may be termed human ethics and the profound religious morality expressed by the Christian law of love must not blind us to the fact that it is the latter, not the former, which belongs to the depths of the soul and is of decisive and ultimate importance. "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor," yes "and even my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am nothing." For self-sacrifice even to death is possible without charity. There have been many instances of it among Communists, Fascists, and Nazis, and as effects of the herd instinct stimulated by war. But the sacrifice is at best a sacrifice of individual egoism to the wider egoism of the group.

In his *Deux Sources de Religion et de Morale*, M. Bergson has painted a depressing picture of the powerful, indeed almost irresistible operation of the herd instinct which impels an individual, normally selfish, to devote his life, even to the supreme sacrifice, for his group arrayed against another. This group to-day is usually a nation, though it may be, as in the case of Communism, a class. And religion itself may be, indeed has regularly been, exploited by the warring group, has been and is still enslaved to the herd instinct. We have witnessed the spectacle of the Italian clergy headed by their bishops abusing the supreme sanctities of religion to bless the mass murder of an unjust war. Nor, frankly, can we be certain that any body of Christian clerics would act otherwise in the same circumstances.¹

¹ Since this was written an English Catholic bishop, Monsignor Dey, has assumed the functions of a recruiting sergeant.

M. Bergson, however, does not regard religion as such or religion in the true sense as the ally of this group egoism. On the contrary he shows that pure spiritual religion and the morality which it involves—in Christian language charity, is universal, is indeed the only power strong enough to defeat the natural egoism of the herd. He has perceived the union between morality at its deepest and religion, unaffected by their dissociation at a more superficial level. In the centre of the soul, at the root of the will, ethics and religion meet in that love which fulfils the law. All creatures are loved in the order of their relation to God, for His sake and in Him. This profound love of the depths is indeed compatible with erroneous conceptions of God's nature. Conceptually, for example, the Buddhist can hardly be said to believe in God. But the devout Buddhist serves and seeks union with an Absolute Being—be it conceived only as a law, transcendental vacuity, universal Buddhahood, or Nirvana, transcending the world and humanity of our natural experience. Even if this absolute is described in negative terms as simply the non-existence or abolition of the being and life we know and live, it is, in fact, an Absolute, transcendent and "wholly other", the unknown God worshipped ignorantly by the mind but apprehended by the spirit.

Where, however, there is no reference to God, even implicit, this fundamental morality, charity is impossible. An individual, indeed, who through no personal fault lacks an explicit knowledge of God may by self-sacrificing service of a purely human cause, though the

idolatrous service of group selfishness, in the depths of his soul serve and sacrifice himself for the unknown God. This also is the case of a believer in God misled by his spiritual guides into the belief that to serve the selfish aims of his group is the service of God. Many a soldier who dies to serve his country's selfish aims in a war therefore unjust dies in the belief that he is dying for the cause of righteousness, if not, indeed, in the service of God who blesses his nation's cause. Fighting in an unjust war, in his actual conduct, "materially" in the language of scholastic philosophy, he is a murderer. But in his intention, which alone separates the soul from God or unites it with Him, "formally" in scholastic terminology, he is not a murderer but in the wide sense a martyr.

If, however, in the individual a vague or merely implicit belief in God may suffice for the existence of charity, this morality of the depths, it is not the same with a society and its governments. If these are not inspired by the Spirit of God, they must be inspired by individual or group selfishness, what St. Augustine termed concupiscence. And where this purely natural purpose, biological and humanist controls a society, it leaves no room for faith in God or the charity which is bound up with religion. In the morality of human relationships the atheist may be as good as a believer or better. And in this humane morality a godless society may excel a society which sincerely accepts a religious creed. But when we penetrate deeper and approach that central region where religion and charity have their seat we become conscious in the unbelieving

individual or society of a hardness, a contraction of vision and sympathy, a self-satisfaction, a comparative superficiality. The humanitarianism of a secularist is often more inhuman than the inhumanity of a Christian. His virtue is the Stoic's, complacent, even arrogant. For this humanist morality *is* after all inhuman. It denies and starves what is deepest in human nature, the spiritual depth where man needs and finds God. And at any moment, if it has to face too powerful a shock of adversity or too glaring a proof of man's inner weakness—this irreligious virtue, self-centered and self-supported, or at most group centred and group supported, may yield to despair or the pursuit of whatever pleasure may promise an opiate for an incurable wound, a screen from the visage of an intolerable reality. And this immorality of the depths, cloaked by the morality of a more superficial level or revealed in its nakedness, is both an effect and a cause of irreligion, a theoretical or merely a practical denial of God, of atheism or agnosticism. For the religious experience of God is in the depths of the soul. And if these depths are closed by a rationalistic refusal to admit their testimony or by the diversion of interest to more superficial levels of experience that apprehension fails or is thrust aside as illusory. And in a rationalistic and secular society, the testimony of religious teachers and organized religion will not supply, as in a religious epoch, a lack of personal religious experience. Men will no longer accept from without a religious faith which exercises no personal appeal.

At a lower stage of religious development, in the

nature religions of paganism man was aware of the Divine in natural phenomena and forces. When the higher religions have displayed the inadequacy of this natural religion, and revealed God's Absolute transcendence and His special presence and operation in the soul at a level deeper than the order of natural phenomena, man cannot return to the religion of nature. Moreover the advance of science has provided natural explanations of phenomena formerly regarded as the direct work of a Divine Being. The thunderstorm is an electrical phenomenon, not the manifestation of Divine wrath. The fertilizing rain is due not to God's direct intervention but to a system of low pressure. And the immorality or rather non-morality of natural forces, their lack of intelligent purpose in which they are below man is realized more clearly than in the past. For the moral conception of Deity taught by the higher religions has made it impossible to ascribe their unintelligent and unmoral operation to the caprice of a Divine despot or the conflict of warring gods. When therefore a culture looks outward in a horizontal direction upon the world of nature and abandons that inward and vertical vision of the spiritual depths in which under the guidance of the higher religions, Christianity above all, man had found the God whom nature could not reveal, it can no longer find Him in this external sphere and on this superficial level. An exclusive, even an excessive preoccupation with nature must involve the obscuration and finally the atrophy of man's religious vision.

Increasingly since the Renaissance the vision of the

European has been directed outwardly and horizontally instead of inwardly and vertically. The change was inevitable, if man was to understand and control natural forces. It was indeed necessary in the ultimate interest of his religion. An exclusively, or almost exclusively, inward and vertical direction of his thought and interest, "inlook" as opposed to outlook, narrows and thus impoverishes that inlook and its religious content. And the exclusively religious interest expressed by St. Augustine's remark that the only knowledge worth having is the knowledge of God and the soul tended to divorce man's secular activities from his religious insight. St. Augustine, for example, mentions the futile cruelty of the flogging in schools. Had he denounced this Sadism as sin and demanded its abolition his influence upon the thought of Western Christendom might have spared the children of future centuries incalculable suffering. But in his exclusive preoccupation with God and the soul he was content to accept this torture as the inevitable result and punishment of sin. There is a measure of truth in the secularist's contention that Christian other-wordliness has produced a deplorable acceptance of remediable evils—particularly war and social oppression.

The movement, therefore, of "outlook" was beneficial both in itself and even in the interest of inlook. The inlook, however, had never been strictly exclusive. Of this the services to civilization rendered in the Dark Ages by the clergy are a sufficient proof. They preserved and propagated the literary inheritance of antiquity, did much to civilize the victorious barbarians

and mitigate their savagery. Monks tilled the soil and cultivated the arts, and their monasteries were centres not only of religion but of secular culture. In the Dark Ages the Saints were the leaders of civilization and progress. The Church was the architect of Europe.¹ In the tenth century the Benedictine St. Dunstan reconciled the defeated Danes with their English conquerors more successfully than any post-War statesman has reconciled a racial minority with the majority to which the fortunes of war have attached it. Though the balance was excessively inclined towards inlook, the greatest achievements and individuals, the most powerful institutions realized the fuller ideal of an outlook inspired by a central inlook, combined the vertical direction towards the soul and God with the horizontal direction to the empirical world without.

Moreover the unbalanced inlook in so far as it existed, though in itself a defect, was, as a temporary phenomenon, inevitable and beneficial. At all costs man had to find his own soul and in his soul God. Or rather he had to find God in his own soul and his soul in God. Only thus could he free himself from bondage to the unsatisfying and transitory order of natural and temporal realities or rather comparative unrealities. If to know God and the soul is not man's only need, it is his supreme and most essential need.

Man could emancipate himself from the empirical and biological order only by a one-sided concentration upon the spiritual life of the depths and its communion with God. This was not indeed necessary

¹ For proof of this see *The Making of Europe*, by Christopher Dawson.

in itself. Theoretically a balance between inlook and outlook is always possible. Actually, however, in view of the limitations of the human mind, this balance was impossible. Advance was possible only by an excessive movement in one direction. Inlook could be achieved only by a temporary sacrifice of outlook. The hostility towards sex which in contrast to the doctrine that marriage is a sacrament has permeated Christian thought and feeling, was one expression of this inevitable exclusiveness. For sex is the most powerful force of that biological order from which man must emancipate his spirit at all costs, and from which in practice he could emancipate himself only by an excessive reaction. And in the scientific sphere the restriction of man's outlook, in space to a petty earth-centred universe and in time to a history of some six thousand years with a future prospect even more narrowly limited by the belief that the last day was at hand was equally inevitable, and, as a temporary conception, equally beneficial. For only when the religious drama of man's spiritual destiny was presented on a stage thus artificially restricted could attention be sufficiently concentrated upon it. Inlook demanded a temporary sacrifice of outlook, the vertical movement to God in the soul a temporary limitation of the horizontal movement to the natural universe.

But although this one-sided cultivation of inlook at the cost of outlook was inevitable and beneficial, it was not in itself a satisfactory attitude or capable of permanence. The reaction in favour of outlook and the horizontal movement of the human mind was inevit-

able in its turn and in the interest of humanity. But owing to our human limitations it also has been excessive. Outlook has been purchased at the cost of inlook, breadth of vision at the cost of depth, the horizontal at the cost of the vertical movement. Moreover man cannot dispense with some measure of concern with the natural order, some measure of outlook and the horizontal movement. Inlook, therefore, can never wholly exclude outlook. Man can never be exclusively occupied with his own soul and with God. Hence, the ages dominated, even excessively from the standpoint of the complete human ideal, by inlook, and therefore by direct preoccupation with religion could not entirely dispense with the complementary outlook. On the other hand, though man cannot find ultimate or profound satisfaction without inlook and the vertical Godward movement, he can live on the empirical plane without it. Therefore the reaction of outlook and the horizontal movement can become exclusive. Inlook can be altogether neglected, and its Divine Object vanish from the field of consciousness. And this has, in fact, happened not only in the case of individuals but even of societies. In Soviet Russia a society has arisen in which religion has been banished deliberately and with a very large measure of success from human life. The atheistic society is in being and on a vast scale. As this movement of exclusive outlook, this naturalism and irreligious humanism, has grown in power and self-confidence; it has produced an increasing blindness to religious truth. Those whose minds it has formed, and they are the majority of

civilized mankind to-day, have their attention fixed so exclusively upon the phenomena visible along the horizontal line of vision that they can no longer see the spiritual realities visible only in the depths by a vertical direction of the spirit. Of the historical religions they see only the surface. But the nature of religious phenomena can be seen only from within, from and in the depths of the spirit. "The natural man perceiveth not the things of the spirit. *Neither can he.*" He is not looking in the right direction—on the right level. Because his vision is confined to the horizontal level of natural phenomena, he is necessarily blind "to the deep things of God." Thus viewed from without religion is unintelligible. The inner principle which gives life and organic unity cannot be seen. All that can be seen is a mass of beliefs and practices at best, meaningless and irrelevant to human life, often absurd, if not positively evil.

For, in the concrete, religion must be expressed by notions and practices drawn from the natural order. It is, and must be, bound up with man's natural needs, ideas and practices, his psychological, even his physiological composition, and the social and economic order in which he lives. All these factors, therefore, not in themselves religious, affect the embodiment of his religious insight and will. As religion advances it achieves indeed an increasing independence of the non-religious departments of human experience. Herbert Spencer's law of evolution is true not only of the physical world, but also of man's intellectual and spiritual development. "An indefinite incoherent homo-

geneity" is progressively replaced by "a definite coherent heterogeneity". Religion, like the other spheres of human knowledge and activity, art, or metaphysics, or physical science, becomes increasingly aware of its autonomy. It is differentiated more clearly from the secular departments of human life, with which at first it was inextricably confused. And it increasingly strives to determine its necessary relations with the latter and its employment of them as indispensable means of its own expression by its distinctive vision and laws.

The nature religions in which the religious Reality, in itself transcendent, is confused with natural phenomena yielded to the spiritual religions in which the former was distinguished from and contrasted with the latter. And the process involved a movement of inlook. The outlooker, however, who has determined the movement of modern civilization, the direction of the modern mind, can see only the non-religious attachments, the natural embodiments of religion. And the more closely a concrete religion is embedded in these the better he understands, or rather, thinks that he understands it. He seizes upon these concomitants which fall within his range of vision, passes over the essential religion, which he cannot see because it does not. He explains the latter by the former. In the primitive nature religions it is easier to neglect the religion and see only its natural and non-religious embodiments. And for this reason it is easier to explain the concrete religion in terms of its non-religious elements. The higher religions are then

explained away as sublimations, adapted to a higher culture, of these nature religions which have already been explained by their outward expressions.

If, for example, the savage invests the Deity with the attributes of his chief, the Christian God is a sublimated chief. If he explains natural mysteries, the weather, a successful hunt, the growth of crops, by immediate reference to the Ultimate Mystery, the latter is nothing more than the cause of these phenomena, and therefore, when the latter have been explained by natural causes, has no further *raison d'être*, and may be discarded as an exploded illusion. If in primitive religion the notion of guilt is bound up with taboos of no genuine moral or religious significance, the sense of sin which found this crude expression is declared to be simply the consciousness of having violated an irrational taboo. Since the desire for atonement and the belief in its possibility were expressed in primitive religion by blood sacrifices offered to appease the wrath of a capricious Deity, atonement can be nothing more than this savage belief. That it represents a profound religious experience, is a fact of the spiritual order which these pagans were trying in their naïve fashion to express these critics cannot see. For it can be seen only by inlook, not by the outlook, which is the only type of vision they possess. Thus the 'single vision', with which Blake rightly charged the rationalism of his time, has made it impossible for the modern secularists, the majority of our contemporaries, to understand religion. The secularist, while he remains a secularist, cannot find God. For although God is present on every level

of experience, He is not visible on the level which we term secular.

For the sake of simplification I speak as though the horizontal movement of outlook were simple, and there were but one such movement on a single level. This, however, is not strictly true. There are degrees of created reality. Broadly, there are three levels of being among natural objects of experience and, therefore, three levels of horizontal movement in our experience of them. There is the level of inorganic being—physical energy expressing itself as attraction and repulsion. We may call it the physical level. There is the level of organic being, of life, an inclined plane rising from the subsentience of plants to the full sentience of animals. Here energy is life, expressing itself as the purpose of the organism to maintain its individual or specific being. This is the biological level. Beyond this is the level of rational being, of the human soul at its more superficial level on which its operations belong to man as a *rational animal* in time and space, and serve his purely natural ends as such. Here the energy is the human spirit in so far as it is a soul informing the body and expressing itself as will moving under the guidance of reason towards man's natural aims—individual and social. We may therefore term it the psychical level.

We must therefore represent the structure of human experience and life, not by a simple †, the intersection of a single horizontal movement of outlook with its corresponding volition and a vertical movement of inlook towards the depths of the spirit, but by that

triple cross, ascribed by art, though not by ritual, to the Pope.



Of the three horizontal bars the topmost represents the physical level and the horizontal movement upon it, the middle the biological level and movement, the lowest the psychical. The second line slopes¹ to signify that the movement on the biological level extends from unconscious or, more probably semi-conscious, life, at its lower end, to fully conscious life at its upper end. This triple nature of the horizontal movement and its outlook can, however, be ignored, the three horizontal movements treated as one horizontal movement in contrast with the vertical. For they agree in a common outward direction, a common outlook towards the world of nature. To this outward direction the inlook involved by the fact that outlook itself is the experience of a self-conscious soul and in the vertical movement from one horizontal level to another is, and should be, subordinate. Otherwise it becomes an introspectiveness which, for lack of a sufficient object, is unhealthy. This subordinate inlook is thus sharply contrasted with the introspection of inlook in its vertical movement to the depths of spirit whose appropriate, indeed, sole object, is discovered in those depths, not in the outer world. Moreover, alike in nature and in our experience, the three horizontal levels

¹ In the 'Papal cross' all the bars are, of course, horizontal.

are so closely interconnected that any tension between them is unimportant in comparison with the tension between the horizontal movements and the vertical. Finally, in a study concerned with man's knowledge of God, the means whereby it is attained and the obstacles which it has to face, the horizontal movements, since they are all directed to the world of nature, and are determined by outlook as opposed to inlook, may be treated as one movement and outlook in contrast with the vertical movement and its inlook which apprehends God.¹

Insight requires inlook and cannot be attained if truth is sought by outlook alone. And the obstacles which stand between our contemporaries and the inlook, without which they cannot find God, are enormous. There are the successes which the secular outlook has achieved. A host of phenomena, physical and psychological, for which a directly religious explanation was formerly given, among them psychophysical phenomena, which frequently accompany mystical prayer, have been explained by natural causes. The naïve teleology which thought that sheep had been created to provide man with wool and mutton has

¹ Since we are regarding the two movements and their respective vision from the standpoint of subjective experience the vertical movement is depicted as a movement towards the depths, the three horizontal movements being correspondingly represented as descending levels from the surface of experience downward as deeper psychological layers are brought into operation. If, however, we were to adopt the objective standpoint of the objects apprehended by these movements we should have to depict the vertical movement as upward towards the Supreme Being, and correspondingly represent the three horizontal movements as ascending levels conversant with an increasingly rich and full reality—progressively higher strata of objective being.

been discredited. Man has discovered and controlled the laws of nature to an extent undreamed of in the past, save by one or two scientific precursors such as Roger Bacon and Leonardo da Vinci. Even human behaviour, individual and social, seems capable of scientific determination and control. Religion therefore appears superfluous, God a hypothesis of which in the words attributed untruly to Laplace, the natural scientist, the psychologist, and the sociologist have no need. And whereas the kingdom of man offers indefinite prospects of extension, the external view of religion, alone possible on this comparatively superficial level, sees solely or chiefly its attendant evils, real or supposed.

Every soil has its distinctive weeds. Religion is no exception. Distinctive vices attach themselves to religion and flourish among religious people. Though some of these, particularly the intolerance which claims such exclusive validity for a particular presentation or aspect of truth that no truth is admitted in other presentations and aspects, have been proved by the example of Marxist communism to survive all religious belief and flourish in a secular orthodoxy as luxuriantly as in any religious fundamentalism, religion is liable to perversions peculiar to itself.

In his study of mystical religion¹ Baron Von Hügel explained that the morbid psychophysical phenomena, disquietingly frequent among mystics and the ill-health of which the mystic is so often a victim, are the price paid by man's body for the tension of a spiritual life for

¹ *The Mystical Element of Religion*. Vol. 2, pp. 57 sqq.

which it was not evolved. And religion, if taken seriously, must involve psychological tension and conflicts which would not otherwise arise. For man is here living at a level more profound than the normal level of human life. He is in contact with an Infinite Reality which breaks through the framework of his normal experience and exceeds all clear expression.

He has shifted the centre of his life from a comparatively intelligible sphere of experience in which he feels himself at home and which he can handle with his normal equipment of reason and will. Both in thought, therefore, and in action, a complete readjustment of focus is required. It is as when a man leaves the brilliant light of a room where his normal day vision can operate and goes out into the night where he must adjust his eyes through a preliminary blindness to the dim night vision on which he must depend to find his way. True, the range of his vision is incalculably extended. Before he could see only objects within a few square feet. Now, he can behold stars hundreds of light years remote. But he can see little of the familiar objects of earth and must grope his way in semi-darkness.

Such is the change of mental vision when the religious man exchanges the light of an order of reality comparatively intelligible, because within the scope of his senses and a reasoning, dependent in the last resort upon forms apprehended in the data of the senses, for the darkness of the Infinite. No wonder that he finds it difficult to adjust his vision as he passes to and fro between the dark prospect of Divine Reality.

and the clear light of a world, at its highest on his own level. No wonder there is groping, uncertainty, strain, maladjustment, and frequent illusion. The night-walker who beholds Sirius is liable to miss the next turning or mistake a post for a man.

The adjustment of values, and therefore of aims, is no easier. How can the vertical movement be harmonized with the horizontal? What is to be the relationship between the Absolute Good dimly apprehended by religion and the finite goods of the world? Historically the adjustment is incomplete, and a one-sided religious movement in the depths of experience has been succeeded by an even more one-sided secular movement in the breadth of a more superficial experience. It is not therefore surprising that it is incomplete in the individual. In practice individual vocation and the fact that the personal religious insight of the majority is so scanty that they have been content to accept without any profound realization religious teaching from without, have made the adjustment fairly easy within the framework of a given society, provided that society itself possesses—as the societies of the past have normally possessed, a religious faith common to their members. The average man finds no great difficulty in harmonizing his religious and his secular life. Content with a religious profession and practice mainly external he confines his personal interest chiefly to the objects of secular experience. Moreover, he interprets what he is told of religion, in terms of that experience, thinking, for example, of God as a magnified human Father or Ruler.

He thus spares himself much painful tension. But his personal religion is woefully inadequate. It does not engage his thought and affections or greatly affect his practice. But the man of strong personal religion must make his individual adjustment of vision and choice with the resultant strain and suffering and the inevitable danger of excesses and maladjustments. To-day human societies no longer possess a common religion. They either lack any common view of reality or where, as in Russia, and increasingly in Germany, a society possesses a common philosophy it is frankly secular. In such circumstances even the average man must possess a fully personal religion, if he is to be religious at all. And to attain or secure this he must at every turn make adjustments with an environment which has lost contact with religion or is openly anti-religious.

The inevitable tension is so great that he is tempted to adopt the easier course, surrender to the secularism around him, abandon inlook altogether, yield entirely to the mighty current of horizontal vision and purpose and thus become blind to the deep world of spirit where alone he can find God. Because to harmonize life at a superficial level automatically gets rid of the tension involved by life at two levels and the further tension of struggle against the social current, the abandonment of religion, though leaving the depths of the soul empty and dissatisfied, will produce on the level of normal consciousness a release of tension, and an adjustment to the environment which disguises that profound loss and makes for increased practical efficiency. This effect will be produced far

more perfectly where, as in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, the secular environment has been unified by a common ideology and a common purpose based upon it. And the secularists, not least the 'convert' himself, will condemn religion as a morbid influence, producing psychological conflict, and therefore unnecessary suffering and inefficiency.

For the whole world gained with the loss of the soul may include the inner world of the soul itself in that superficial sphere which is the conscious aspect of man's life as a rational animal.

Moreover, the infinity of the Divine Object of religion, its incomprehensible mystery exceeding any image or concept which a created mind can frame, renders it particularly easy to confuse a human, and therefore infinitely defective conception of God with the Reality for which it stands. Religion has afforded freer scope than any other sphere of human experience for credulity and superstition. It has provided a shelter for the mental laziness which shirks the labour of exact thought, an excuse for the conceit which claims Divine Truth for the opinions of an individual or group and the love of power which seeks a Divine sanction for its oppression. Religion has proved a useful ally of the despotic state, enabling it in God's Holy Name to enforce obedience at home or drive its subjects into the slaughter-house of war. Tyranny, domestic, political, and social has been so often invested with a religious halo that, when exclusive outlook has blinded men to its true nature, it is only too easy to believe that religion, if not the deliberate invention

of the soldier and the monarch, was at least unconsciously created or fostered by them as an instrument of government. When, as in Italy, religion is abused as an opium of the people, it is not surprising that men who, under the influence of their environment, have eyes only for its human accompaniments, accept Lenin's dictum that it *is* the opium of the people.

The same spiritual myopia makes it difficult, if not impossible, to perceive that the explanation of phenomena by natural causes does not exclude an ultimate Divine Cause. When a phenomenon has been successfully fitted into a sequence of natural phenomena and can be controlled by manipulating that series, the man whose lack of inlook confines his vision to the level on which that sequence occurs, is convinced that he knows the entire cause of the phenomenon. He does not see that the sequence, indeed the entire order, of phenomena to which it belongs must itself have a cause. Scientists, it is true, are beginning to admit that they cannot attain ultimate or sufficient causes but must be content with establishing invariable sequences and co-existences. Indeed they often refuse to admit that these sequences and co-existences, inasmuch as they provide a limited explanation of the phenomena, and are complexes of energies acting upon their members and indefinitely on correlated complexes of phenomena beyond are to that extent causes and effects, though relative and partial. Usually, however, the result is an agnosticism which denies that we can go beyond complexes of phenomena and attain any knowledge either of genuine causes or the nature of things. That is to

say, even when it is admitted that the knowledge attainable by the horizontal outlook of the sciences is inherently limited and cannot penetrate to the ultimate reality of its objects, lack of inlook maintains the prejudice that this outlook is man's sole method of acquiring knowledge. The admission, therefore, produces only the resigned scepticism which denies that we can or need attain any knowledge exceeding these limits.

The sole difference, therefore, from the religious standpoint between the rationalists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who believed that man's reason could discover the nature of the universe and our contemporary sceptics, is that whereas the former believed that the lighted chamber of man's day vision is potentially co-extensive with reality, the latter are aware of the dark world without, but, instead of entering it, hurry back into the room, fasten the door, and declare that the outside world is inaccessible. The practical conclusion in both cases is the same: man must confine himself to the lighted chamber where he can see clearly and not waste his powers on the dark world of religion.

Since reason has disappointed its devotees' expectation that the nature of reality can be discovered by a reasoning restricted *a priori* to clear apprehensions of definite forms abstracted immediately or ultimately from sensible phenomena, they have shown a disposition to enthrone in its place energy or life. Reason, they say, is but a product of life, the tool it has forged for the practical manipulation of experience. This irrational life is the absolute reality. It is, however,

a purely immanent force, the stuff or substance of empirical reality. It does not transcend the world. Consequently, though these energeticists, by ascribing absolute reality and value to this cosmic energy adopt towards it a religious attitude, they do not possess a religion but merely a substitute for it. For the object thus deified is not a genuine absolute transcending completely the contingent world of our experience, and therefore mankind. It is but the reality of that world and of man. And man is its supreme expression. This energeticism thus amounts to a deification of man not by God's free gift, but in his own right. And since the individual is too obviously impotent for solitary self-deification a human society is the divinity of this energeticist pseudo-religion. Though in theory the creed of Soviet Russia is materialism, mechanical materialism, the sole genuine materialism is rejected as heresy, and matter is declared to be auto-dynamic, self-moving. It is thus regarded as energy rather than matter in the sense of the older materialism. The ideology of Russia is a form of energeticism. And social humanity embodied in the Communist party and the Communist society which the party seeks to construct is the supreme manifestation of this auto-dynamic matter or cosmic energy, the final achievement of its self-development through the ages. The Nazi deification of the Nordic race is another and more stupid form of this social energeticism. Thus the discovery that reason as understood by the rationalist and confined to the level of definite apprehension and empirical phenomena, cannot discover the nature of

the universe, has led to a revolt against reason in favour of irrational energy instead of opening the door to that profound religious inlook which alone can solve the cosmic enigma. It has thus erected a new obstacle to this religious insight. Immanental energeticism is as secular, humanist, and irreligious as immanental rationalism. And by subordinating form to energy, light to life, thought to will, and theory to practice, it renders even more difficult than before the vertical movement of the intellect by which alone it can escape the bondage of the empirical order, overpass the "flaming walls of the universe" and find God.

Because secularists have no insight into the depths of being, no vertical movement of the spirit, they cannot see that the phenomenal sequence presupposes by its order, a rational order in the universe by which these sequences are determined, the expression of a Divine Reason. Nor can they see that the forces experienced as operative in the universe presuppose as their ultimate source of energy a Divine Energy, the Giver and Source of life and all the energies below the vital level. If the universe, indeed being as such, were unintelligible we could know nothing whatever, not even self-evident axioms of logic and mathematics or the phenomenal sequences which must be discovered if daily life or physical science is to be possible. Being therefore must be intelligible. This intelligibility is its formal aspect, the form outer and inner in virtue of which things are what they are, possess a definite nature. And these forms, whose apprehension by the mind is knowledge, depend in turn upon the ideal

order in the Divine Mind, the Divine Wisdom, upon God as Absolute Superintelligence, the Form of forms. And similarly the energy which is the substance of objects and the product of a metaphysical union between their form and its potential energy, its "matter" in the metaphysical sense of the term is explicable only as produced and maintained by the Divine Superenergy or Superlife, the Living and Lifegiving Spirit. For energy-objects are not, as the Marxist energeticism maintains, strictly self-moving. Their motion, by which must be understood change generally, is not wholly self-determined, but requires an external stimulus to produce it. But an infinity of mutually determining and determined energies is impossible. The entire complex of inter-related and inter-active energies which composes the universe must, in the last resort, be moved by the Divine Energy which changes all things without being itself changed.¹ If the order of the universe whereby it is intelligible is itself unintelligible except as a reflection of the Divine Wisdom, however far we carry our discovery of created intelligibilities, the universe, as a whole, will remain as unintelligible apart from God as it was to the ignorance of primitive man. The complex of ordered sequences expressible as scientific laws will, indeed, have been enormously extended. Groups of phenomena formerly unrelated to any other will have been subsumed with others in a more comprehensive group. That is to say the forms of these

¹ For a fuller statement of the argument here anticipated, see pp. 75 *sqq.* *post.*

subordinate groups will henceforward be known as instances or aspects of a more comprehensive form. For example, the group of magnetic phenomena has been subsumed under the more comprehensive group of electrical phenomena. The form which determines the former group has been shown to be a subordinate aspect of the form which determines the latter. But apart from the Divine Form which it reflects, this more comprehensive form remains as unintelligible, metaphysically, as it is and must always remain scientifically unintelligible. For the natural sciences cannot explain their ultimates, forms which cannot be subsumed under a wider form within their scope. No extension, however wide, of scientific intelligibility, can remove the ultimate or metaphysical unintelligibility of the universe apart from God. The progress of scientific knowledge, whether in physics, biology or psychology, cannot therefore substantially affect metaphysics or religion which lie beyond their sphere. They can affect religion only accidentally by placing in the natural sequence of phenomena and thus rendering them relatively intelligible phenomena for which formerly no scientific explanation could be given and which were therefore explained too hastily by immediate reference to God.

It is not otherwise in the dynamic sphere, the sphere of causation in the strict sense¹ Here we seek to discover not only the static sufficient reason of phenomena, the complex of sequences and concomitances to which they belong, but their dynamic sufficient reason,

¹ This also anticipates an argument stated more fully on pp. 84 *seqq.*

their cause. We seek to subsume the energy physical, physiological or psychological which produces a given change under a more comprehensive energy of which it is an instance. The practical knowledge of daily life is concerned with this dynamic causation which, moreover, we directly experience. But however comprehensive be the energy to which we reduce the energies operative in particular changes, were it even a cosmic energy operative in every sphere and on every level, the ultimate metaphysical dependence upon the Divine Energy is unaffected. From this dynamic standpoint also any conceivable progress of knowledge can affect religion only by discovering an immediate natural cause, a natural energy producing effects formerly ascribed in default of any other explanation to the immediate agency of God, without the intervention of a created agent. Plagues, for example, once explained as God's direct intervention to punish or purify from sin, are now known to be due to the agency of bacteria, itself made possible by insanitary conditions. These accidental effects upon religion, though perhaps productive of temporary difficulties, are beneficial. For they remove from our conception of God, His Providence and Action, superstitious anthropomorphisms, which hinder our perception of His Infinite and Incomprehensible Majesty. It is no longer so easy to think of God as a magnified man whose action is arbitrary and limited, interfering here and there with an order whose normal course is sharply distinguished from these special interventions. Nor are we obliged to abandon the belief in the efficacy of prayer for par-

ticular objects, still less in a special Providence. It is simply the mode under which these are conceived which must be changed. If it is no longer credible that God *interferes* with the order of events, the weather, for example, or the incidence of disease in answer to prayer, the decree by which this order is established in the abiding present of God's eternity takes account of the prayers we offer and is established in view of them. The chain of secondary causes in which this order is realized has thus, religion believes, been ordained with regard to prayer which, moreover, is a spiritual energy among the created energies through which God works. Though scientific ignorance made the anthropomorphic view that God's will was changed by prayer credible to the simple believer, it had no place in the philosophy or theology of the great mystics and religious thinkers. They knew that the entire order of events, including answers to prayer, is the phenomenal effect of one eternal decree, the expression of a Divine Will identical with God Himself. The efficacy of prayer is, indeed, restricted by the limitations of created being which render many answers to prayer, in themselves desirable, intrinsically impossible. For religion, however, prayer for temporal good occupies a secondary place, wholly subordinate to the essential objects of prayer, adoration of God and union with Him and the fulfilment of His will.

Whatever may be true of popular devotion or occasional formulas, the Christian conception of God has always been the reverse of anthropomorphic. It is the true agnosticism which insists upon His incomprehen-

sibility and the consequent inadequacy of any human conception of Deity. This incomprehensible transcendence of God, so great that no attribute, not even existence, can be affirmed of Him in the same sense in which it is affirmed of any creature was explained in the sixth century by the Syrian monk who called himself Dionysius the Areopagite and whose writings became the fountainhead of Christian mystical theology. And it is accepted by the dogmatic equally with the mystical theologian. The human mind, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, can indeed arrive at the knowledge that God is, but not what He is. Of His nature it can know only what He is not, namely anything which exists, and as it exists, in any creature.

In *The Cloud of Unknowing* (ignorance) an anonymous English mystic of the fourteenth century points out that in this life the mind must always find a cloud of unknowing between itself and God. And the further a soul advances in contemplative prayer the more fully she realizes the utter inadequacy of all images and notions and the more powerfully is she aware of this cloud of unknowing which cannot be pierced by the understanding but by love alone. "Love may reach to God in this life, but not knowing. . . . I would leave all that thing that I can think and choose to my love that thing that I cannot think. For He may well be loved, but not thought. By love may He be gotten and holden; but by thought never." And the guiding principle of the supreme doctor of Christian mysticism, St. John of the Cross, in his *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *Dark Night of the Soul*,

is this utter transcendence of God above any image or conception the human mind can frame. How then is this Christian agnosticism distinguishable from agnosticism pure and simple, as represented for example, by Herbert Spencer's unknowable? As Mr. Alfred Noyes has shown, Spencer's agnosticism theoretically approaches this Christian transcendentalism. There is, however, a practical difference of the utmost importance between the agnosticism of Spencer and the agnosticism of St. John of the Cross. Spencer concluded that personal communion is impossible between Man and the Unknowable. So far as human life is concerned, the latter might as well be non-existent. The unknowable is simply the limit of theoretical philosophy. Agnosticism of this type excludes the vertical movement of religion and confines man to the horizontal level of secularism, as effectively as the most dogmatic atheism. Christian agnosticism, on the other hand, is attained and realized precisely by the vertical movement of the spirit away from creatures. It is, therefore, a knowledge of God so profound and so rich that it cannot be expressed. The Christian 'agnostic' understands that if God is nothing to be found in creatures or grasped by a created intelligence, it is because He is infinitely more than the highest created being. If Spencer also knew this theoretically it was only as an abstract and sterile theory. And because God is more than the highest forms of being, He includes their being and value. If he is not goodness, as we know it in creatures, He is supergoodness; if not wisdom, He is superwisdom; if not love, super-

love. And if He is not personal as man is personal with the limitations of human personality, He is not impersonal but superpersonal. And because He is superpersonal the conviction of religious experience that man can, and does, enter into a personal communion with Him, or rather that He enters into a personal communion with man, is not an illusion incompatible with the Divine infinity. And the higher forms and levels of created being, though infinitely remote from the Divine Absolute, are nearer to Him than lower forms and orders. "Are not life", wrote Dionysius, "and goodness more cognate to Him [God] than air and stone?"¹ If, however, the higher levels of the created being are nearer to God than the lower and He is, therefore, more present in the former than in the latter—for they share more fully and reflect less faintly His life and light—the Divine transcendence does not involve the pantheism or theopanism² for which all things are equally divine or equally remote from divinity and therefore equally good or equally bad.

¹ Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa taught that in God 'opposites coincide' (God being the *coincidentia oppositorum*). This was a dangerous error. Logically, it involves the immoral consequence that wickedness and moral goodness, truth and falsehood, coincide in God. And it forgets that one member of many contrasted pairs is not positive, but the pure negation of its opposite. Darkness, for example, is the negation of light, emptiness of plenitude, error of truth, wickedness of moral good. These negatives, far from coinciding with their opposites in God, are excluded by their negative character from His Absolute Positivity. If even the positive being and value of creatures, because it is defective, that is to say, involves a negative factor, can exist in God only analogously, what is essentially negative cannot be in any sense attributed to Him. (If mystics speak of the Divine Darkness it is but the language of appearances, and signifies an excess of light, so brilliant that it blinds the feeble vision of the human mind.)

² Pantheism is the doctrine that all is God; theopanism, a term coined by Max Scheler, the doctrine that God is all.

Whether it ascribes an equal value to all creatures or an equal worthlessness, pantheism rejects one of the two movements by which alone man can interpret and handle his experience as a whole. Positive pantheism has no place for vertical movement. If all forms of experience and their objects are equally valuable and divine, our entire experience must consist in horizontal movement to and among these objects of equal reality and worth. We cannot move vertically from one level of reality to another. Negative pantheism, theopanism by regarding all levels of our experience as equally worthless and unreal, excludes the horizontal movement. And the vertical movement itself can lead only to a negation. For even our dim experience of Ultimate Reality in the depths of spirit, in as much as it is the experience of a creature, not that reality itself, must be as remote from that Reality as our more superficial experiences. The Absolute is, therefore, conceived as the simple negation of human experience and its objects—as, for example, was the Nirvana of the primitive Buddhist. The transcendentalism of Christian theology by its doctrine that there are degrees of reality and, therefore, of approximation to God, leaves room for both movements, the horizontal and the vertical, though admitting the paradox which our experience enforces but reason cannot solve, that somehow one finite being can be closer to Infinite Being than another, though both are infinitely distant. Mathematical infinity, however, presents us with paradoxes not unlike this metaphysical paradox.

The positive content contained in the more concrete

and anthropomorphic conceptions of God represents aspects of His Being not contained in the more abstract and impersonal conceptions of metaphysical theology. There is, for example, a positive truth in our notions of God as angry, forgiving, loving with an affectionate love, and answering prayer, as our Ruler, Friend, Father and Lover, which is not contained in metaphysical conceptions of His nature as immutable, unrelated to creatures, without emotion and unaffected by our actions or fate. The former supplement the latter, the latter the former. For both types of attribute are false in the limited conception of them which we are obliged to form, true in their positive content when these limitations have been removed and its value thus raised by an infinite power.¹

The modern secularist, when from lack of inlook and the intellectual humility, that will accept the inlook of other individuals, societies and epochs, he sees only the inevitable limitations attaching to all human conceptions of God, both the more anthropomorphic and the metaphysical, compels the believer to realize these limitations as, perhaps, he had not realized them before. For, although the official Christian theology has always been transcendental and 'agnostic', it has not been grasped by the majority of Christians. They have accepted anthropomorphic conceptions of God without realizing their limitations, as being, therefore, substantially true, as they stand with these limitations. The attitude of the will being more important for individual

¹ This point is well made by Max Scheler. *Das Ewige im Menschen*, pp. 337 sqq.

religion than correct theology, since the former, not the latter, unites us to God or separates us from Him, this mattered less when an adequate theology was held by the leaders of thought and was the official creed of society. To-day, however, such anthropomorphisms are fatal to religion. When a secular society confronts a religious minority with the anthropomorphism of the popular conception of Godhead, which it mistakes for the Christian doctrine of God, religious people who have not understood the human inadequacy of their notion of Deity, being unable to resist the attack made upon these anthropomorphic notions discard together with them their faith in God.

When the social environment accepts a religious creed, the average individual accepts it, even if its nature or the way in which it has been presented is so defective that it does not afford the spiritual comfort which religion should give or is actually distasteful. When, however, the social environment is hostile or indifferent, a defective creed or a defective presentation of a creed provokes a general revolt. Since Victorian moralism and respectability achieved one of the narrowest, most repulsive and most lifeless presentments of religion known in history, it is not surprising that, when in the next generation, society ceased to accept religion as a matter of course, countless men and women rejected as part of their reaction against Victorianism the creed it professed, truth and falsehood alike. A God who is no more than a policeman standing guard over the social proprieties and the possessions of the rich is such a caricature of the true God that the majority

of those who have never learned a worthier conception of Deity have discarded religion altogether, blaspheming what, through the fault of parents and teachers, they do not know and have had little opportunity of knowing. Apart from the remote places where the nineteenth century still lingers out its last breath this reaction is indeed over. For good and for evil it has destroyed the social order of the last century and the beliefs it professed. But it has done its work only too thoroughly. Together with the Victorians' moralistic and legalistic pseudo-Christianity it has rejected the religious truth which it contained. Victorian religion, such as it was, lived upon the inherited religious capital of Christian faith. This inheritance has been spent and society is a religious bankrupt.

Only by his personal insight can the individual preserve or rediscover religious truth in a secularist society. And insight is the product of inlook. Without inlook there can be no insight, therefore no personal religion. For religious insight is attained only by the vertical movement of inlook, not by the horizontal movement of outlook.

Nor can acceptance of the insights of religious teachers bring religion to those who have accepted the secularist principle current in their *milieu* that only outlook attains truth and inlook is subjective delusion, the self-satisfaction of irrational instinct.

In the long run, the attack upon the externals and accidents of religion conducted by a secularist society whose exclusive outlook sees nothing beyond, must deepen and purify religion by compelling the believer

to penetrate intellectually, as well as devotionally, beneath these superficialities which, to adopt a simile used by St. John of the Cross, are but the earthen pitchers carried by Gideon's army concealing the lamps within. In so far as they are unworthy, obstacles to a profound, wide and truly spiritual religion, they must, like the pitchers, be broken that the Divine Light within may shine forth and dazzle the secularist foe with its splendour. Where they are defensible or actually valuable but are accepted as adequate and confused with the transcendent reality in and beyond them—for example, when God's anger is understood, not as His essential opposition to evil, but as an all too human hatred of the evildoer—they must be so understood that their positive content alone is accepted, freed from the limitations they suggest. Though these pitchers must not be broken and thrown aside, they must be so held that the Inner Light shines through them, transforming their rough and dark surface.

Evelyn Underhill tells a revealing story of a fundamentalist meeting. “‘We believe,’ cried the speaker, ‘in the Bible from cover to cover.’ ‘Yes,’ shouted his audience, ‘*and the covers as well.*’ Since the object of religion is Absolute, religious history shows a persistent tendency to ascribe the same Absolute character to the human vessels and veils in and through which the Religious Absolute, God, is necessarily apprehended by men and communicated to them. In a society professing a common religion, but in which the critical and scientific temper is undeveloped—such a society, for instance, as medieval Europe when even St. Thomas

could seriously believe in *incubi* and *succubi*,¹ this deification of the covers of God's Word which invests the created and relative vehicle of the Absolute with the value of the Absolute itself mattered little. Indeed, it was probably the only way by which the average believer could maintain a firm hold upon the Absolute content within the covers. But even under these conditions the restrictions involved by this confusion between the covers of religious truth and that truth itself were an evil tolerable, like the too exclusive inlook which made it possible, only as a temporary condition in which religion could strike root in minds undistracted by the preoccupations of a scientific outlook. The development of this outlook by making this fundamentalist confusion impossible has done a service to religion. For religious truth in its purity, as distinct from forms and ideas in themselves non-religious, has been delivered from bondage to the latter. Its apprehension as *distinctively religious* truth transcending all other categories of knowledge has been correspondingly deepened. Religion can resume its task of adjustment with secular thought and life with less danger than hitherto of becoming enslaved by the latter. When, as in the Christendom of the past, a too exclusive occupation with inlook and its religious Object² prevailed, however inevitably and beneficially,

¹ *De Potentia*, Question 6, Art. 8.

² If we could see God in open vision a too exclusive occupation with Him would be impossible. For in God we should know creatures better than in themselves. In this life, however, in which man's fullest knowledge of God is veiled, what Nicholas of Cusa termed a learned ignorance, a direct occupation with creatures is necessary and religion may take too exclusive a place in human life.

in man's intellectual life, religion attempted to dominate the secular sciences. An astronomical theory could be condemned as incompatible with Scripture, as though the latter contained a Divine Revelation of astronomical truth. The religious opposition to the biological hypothesis of evolution is another instance of the same tendency.

We may rejoice that the scientific outlook has established the autonomy of these secular branches of knowledge and imposed upon the believer the task of utilizing these immediately secular sciences in the indirect, not the direct, service of religion, as revealing the work and wisdom of God on the natural level.¹ The late Baron von Hügel insisted upon the indirect but very real value of the mechanist and quantitative sciences with their superficial exclusion of Divine action, as a corrective of the anthropomorphism so anxious to detect the activity of God on the phenomenal level that it lost sight of His universal action in the activities of natural agents and looked for an arbitrary Divine interference with the natural order.

The same benefit may be expected from modern secularism in the social sphere. Partly from the overwhelmingly religious temper of the epoch, partly, as Soloviev pointed out² as a result of the widespread breakdown of efficient secular government, in the confusion which followed the fall of the Roman Empire, the ecclesiastical hierarchy was invited to undertake tasks of secular government. Under the circumstances the clergy could hardly do otherwise than accept the

¹ Not, however, as being *God's* work and wisdom. See pp. 54 *sqq. post.*

² *Justification of the Good.*

position thrust upon them. The alternative was an anarchy fatal not only to the remains of civilization but to religion itself or, in view of the inextricable interweaving of the religious and the secular society, a slavery of the former to the latter actually effected in Eastern, and in large measure even in Latin, Christendom. But the cost to religion proved very great. Force, the weapon of the State, was placed at the service of the Church, which as a spiritual body whose life principle is Divine Love, cannot employ it without betraying her nature. In return the State which, however religious her rulers, never gives without exacting a full return, demanded and obtained a religious sanction for social oppression and unjust war. And when it became too secular and too powerful to feel any need of the Church and resumed the temporal sovereignties and possessions granted in the past, a human love of power and wealth made churchmen unwilling to surrender them. A period of conflict ensued when the temporal power and privilege of the Church was confused with her spiritual claim, and the clergy supported political parties who sought the aid of religion in their attempts to preserve or restore an obsolete political order advantageous to themselves, though incidentally of temporal profit to the Church. This in turn has given the secularist opponents of religion a pretext to encroach upon the spiritual rights of the Church and restrict her freedom. And the militant totalitarian state is determined to impose its worship upon all its subjects and leave no room for genuine religion. For religion cannot render to Cæsar the things

of God or acknowledge him as divine. Here, too, the separation enforced by secularism is emancipating and purifying, deepening and intensifying religion among the minority who hold fast to it. And when the battle now joined, a battle without quarter between religion, the worship of the transcendent God and the totalitarian state, the embodiment of a purely humanist society acknowledging no Absolute, that is no God other than a human group has been fought and won, religion will be able to resume its task of inspiring human society, not as formerly in alliance with the State and relying upon the force which the State can place at its service, but by supplying a free society wider than the State with the religious faith which must be its basis and centre.

In place of a religious State there will be a religious society, religious because its members freely accept religious truth. Meanwhile, however, since the majority of states and almost all national societies are more or less aggressively secularist, the social forces of instruction, suggestion and example, in some countries even the penal code, are erecting an enormously strong barrier between the individual and religious insight.

The position is similar between religion and modern science. In themselves the advance of natural science, the cultivation of its outlook and acquaintance with its principles and methods, benefit religion. We have only to recall Pasteur and Abbot Mendel to perceive that the assertion still commonly repeated that science and religion are mutually opposed is untrue. Where, however, as in the modern world, religious insight is lacking

or feeble, science tends in the concrete to be hostile to religion, as conversely, when religious insight was powerful and widespread, outlook comparatively undeveloped, religion tended in the concrete not indeed to condemn, but with St. Augustine, to deprecate science, and discourage the application of scientific methods to questions bordering upon theology. For if the scientific method is taken to be the sole method of attaining truth, it becomes impossible *a priori* to attain any religious or indeed metaphysical truth.¹ Science is concerned exclusively with definite abstract forms; indeed, it would appear, only with quantitative forms, as being alone sufficiently definite and capable of exact measurement. Yet even of the corporeal universe quantity is but one aspect. We do not possess the entire or even the most valuable truth about the sea when we know the chemical composition of its water, the direction of its currents and the speed of its tides. Those aspects which make the sea an object of loveliness and awe, the hues that shift upon its surface with the play of sunlight and cloud, the majesty of storm, the peace of calm, because they cannot be measured, escape scientific knowledge. The scientific method has no means of reaching the beauty of things. Yet beauty is real, indeed more real, because a richer and fuller reality, than the quantities measured by science. And if even the corporeal universe thus ex-

¹ When, therefore, Lord Russell refuses to admit any method of arriving at truth except that of science (*Religion and Science*, p. 189) this false epistemological principle, or rather prejudice, makes it logically impossible for him to accept any religious truth. His agnosticism, amounting in fact to a positive atheism, is inevitable. For within the sphere to which he arbitrarily restricts truth there is and there can be no evidence of God.

ceeds the scope of the scientific method, spiritual realities elude its grasp. In psychology it can deal only with physiological accompaniments of psychical states. It cannot directly handle these states themselves. If a given emotion of love produces a greater nervous disturbance than another, the scientific method can, in theory at least, measure the quantitative difference between these physiological processes. And if one emotion were found to produce a nervous disturbance twice as intense as the other, it might be said in this sense that it was twice as intense. But it could not be said that the love was twice as intense. For this is incapable of exact determination. Still less can the scientific method define the nature of a psychological state, and its relation to another, give us, for example, a scientific definition of jealousy or state its exact relationship to hatred. And the spiritual profundity in the depths of the spirit where the Divine object of religion is apprehended escapes scientific scrutiny altogether. If then the prevalent intellectual temper is disposed to deny the objective truth of everything which the scientific method cannot in principle handle, everything, therefore, which is not a quantitative form or reducible to it, all qualities, beauty, for example, must be held unreal. Religion therefore must be declared purely subjective, a state of experience in which no object is apprehended existing independently of the experience. And metaphysics which in its highest range confines with religion will also be dismissed as a subjective construction which tells us nothing about the objective nature of reality but merely reveals the metaphysician's

mental and emotional temper. Metaphysics has fallen into discredit and foundered in anarchy during the centuries which have witnessed the advance of the natural sciences to triumphs beyond the dreams of the past.

Thus the domination of outlook and its horizontal movement of thought and purpose since the Renaissance,¹ culminating in an exclusive and intolerant secularism, has built a wall of most formidable strength across the path which leads to God. Social pressure and mass suggestion insist that the objects of natural experience attained by the horizontal movement of mind and will are alone valuable or even real. And the prevailing intellectual attitude confines the attainment of objective truth to those branches of knowledge in which the scientific method is applicable. The sole truth accessible consists, it is held, of definite quantitative forms abstracted immediately or mediately from sensible phenomena.

This epistemological prejudice is supported by a number of converging factors. It is harmony with a general preoccupation with practical organization and achievement which in the less intelligent majority degenerates into a superficial absorption in the routine of private business or social service or an equally superficial pursuit of amusement. For the application of the scientific method has made this achievement and this organization possible. And these in turn maintain the work and amusement of the average citizen.

¹ There was a reaction in favour of inlook and therefore of religion during the seventeenth century. But it was nothing more than a partial and temporary check to the advancing tide of outlook and secularism.

And the clear truths of science appear to contrast favourably with the dim truths of metaphysics and religion. While the metaphysician gazes into the obscure depths of being to contemplate forms which seem pale abstractions, and the religious man in the centre of his spirit is worshipping a God whose presence and action are not evident on the surface of human experience, science is getting on faster and faster with the job of understanding and controlling the world. Even those who realize that our civilization may be blown to pieces by the military application of scientific discovery are apt to console themselves with the not unreasonable belief that the ruin will be, if not averted, at least restored by the positive resources of science wielded by a society better organized economically and politically. Communism, Fascism, Democracy, Technocracy, Social Credit, Free Trade, the League of Nations, the Supernational State—one of these will save the world. That one or some of these prescriptions, or more probably a suitable mixture of them, could save the "world" I am disposed to agree, but not the "soul" of man. What of that? For the secularist the soul is an exploded fiction. Resolve our psychological conflicts on the more superficial plane, tensions between warring instincts or complexes and the soul is saved in the only sense in which it exists and can be saved.

Science is accumulating steadily and quickly a store of facts solid and unquestioned. Have metaphysics and religion made a similar advance? Metaphysical and religious progress, it may be replied, is not to be expected from a civilization which has devoted its thought

and effort to the sciences and their application. And from the nature of their objects neither metaphysics nor religion can advance in the sense in which the sciences advance. For at the profound and dim levels of being with which they are concerned an increasing supply of new facts cannot be expected. The sole progress possible is a more accurate scrutiny of truth long since known, and the relation of truth discovered in other fields to this central truth. But the objector is not convinced; for he cannot grasp the notion of any truth other than a clearly defined fact or formula such as the sciences present him with.

From all sides the gaze is almost irresistibly forced outward along a horizontal line of vision. Only by a painful effort can a man, not of an exceptionally contemplative, philosophical or religious turn of mind look inwards along that vertical line of vision which alone leads to God. The phrase, "turn of mind", is illuminating. The contemporary secularist fails to see God because he cannot "turn his mind" in the right direction. The influences, intellectual and practical, to which he is exposed are turning his mind in the wrong direction. He is thus confined to the horizontal range of vision within which God is invisible.

Outlook itself, it is true, involves an insight, therefore an inlook—if not into the spirit of the knower—into the nature of the object. For all knowledge, even the perception of sensible objects, is an apprehension of form by the mind. In and through the sense stimuli the mind apprehends the outer form of the object, and this apprehension of the outer form in the sense

data is already an insight. And when in conception the form is abstracted and thus clearly distinguished from its phenomenal embodiment, still more when an inner form, an idea is apprehended, it is by a deeper, a more penetrating inlook. Thus even horizontal vision is in its way insight and inlook is necessary. At all levels perception is an operation of intellect, the function which among (inter) the phenomenal complex of concrete experience reads (legit) form. If this were admitted it would be easier to admit the validity of the profounder though more obscure insights of inlook in the stricter sense, of the vertical movement of intuition. And, in fact, many who will not admit intuitive evidence in this profound sphere do not admit it in the more superficial. Complete sceptics, they allow only a practical or a hypothetical truth, to the insights of every-day experience or the sciences. But sceptics and positivists agree in dismissing the insight of the metaphysician and the religious man.

Under these circumstances the proofs of God's existence, though in themselves valid and cogent, cannot produce conviction. Those who remain unconvinced are often of the best will and high intelligence. But they cannot turn their minds in the right direction. Or if they do, if for instance they consent to study the classic documents of religious experience, the *a priori* dogma that a dim insight which lies beyond the sphere of sensible experience and its scientific implications, outside the range of that horizontal vision which, they suppose, is alone authentic must therefore be illusory, makes them refuse credit to their witness.

There are excellent statements of the proofs of theism. Unfortunately, their power to convince by no means corresponds with their intrinsic value.

Those to whom they are addressed are looking for demonstrations from sense data, such as they think they have found in the sciences. And these are not forthcoming. There is a display, a "monstration" of a metaphysical or religious object, apprehensible only by the metaphysical or religious institution which respectively apprehends metaphysical and religious form.¹

Since even scientific knowledge is not in fact demonstration from data in the last resort purely sensible, but represents a direct intuition of form, the difference between scientific knowledge, and metaphysical and religious, is not a difference in the type of apprehension. For in both cases there is a monstration of form to the mind which intuits it. It is solely the difference between definiteness and indefiniteness, clarity, and obscurity.²

This, however, is not understood by those who either misconceive the nature of scientific knowledge or adopt a sceptical view, pragmatic or relativist, of scientific truth. They are therefore blind to a metaphysical and religious monstration which cannot even be plausibly represented as a demonstration from sense data without any intellectual intuition of form.

¹ As we shall see, the Divine Object of religious experience is not, strictly speaking, form as opposed to an energy-object from which it is abstracted, but a Form which is at the same time an Energy—Absolute Form and Absolute Energy in one.

² There are indeed clear metaphysical intuitions. These, however, are not concerned with the depths of being, but with the qualities common to all being even on the most superficial level of reality.

This *a priori* exclusion of a particular category of evidence stands equally in the way of the metaphysical and the religious 'proof' of God's Existence. For both lie, though unequally, in the depths of being and of the spirit which experiences them, and therefore are accessible only to the vertical movement of inlook.

CHAPTER II

THE METAPHYSICAL PROOFS OF THEISM

THE metaphysical proofs of theism, pre-eminent among which are the classic five formulated by St. Thomas—from Motion (Change), Efficient Cause, Possible Being, the Degrees of Being, and Design—are insights of metaphysical forms, aspects of being. Plunging the gaze of the intellect into the depths of being and fixing it on universal and fundamental forms, attributes of the limited being which we know both in the external universe and in ourselves, we discover implicit in them a reference to an Absolute and therefore Infinite Being the ground of this finite being, both as existent and as intelligible. And this Absolute Being which contains and infinitely exceeds the positive being of finite realities, even the highest, is what we mean by God.

Since these proofs are metaphysical no amount of scientific reasoning on the empirical level of scientific form can reach them. No increase in our knowledge of the physical, biological, and psychical orders—no advance along the three horizontal lines of outlook can increase or diminish the metaphysical evidence of God's existence. For the latter being derived from being as such is already given by the existence of any being whatsoever, and by our knowledge of it. As regards the argument from design, this statement may appear

to require qualification. For the argument seems to depend on the empirical evidence of design in nature. To regard it in this light, however, is to misconceive it. No evidence of empirical design can, as such, establish the existence of God. For so far as our knowledge of phenomena can take us, the design might be due either to an unknown cause of the same order, or a metaphysical cause other than Absolute Being, therefore, less than Divine. It was indeed because Kant's epistemology confined speculative knowledge to the sphere of phenomena that he was logically obliged to reject, as he did, not only the proof from design but all the other metaphysical proofs of theism. And his moral proof from practical reason, assumes a direct apprehension of ethical forms—values. If, however, we can attain a direct knowledge of ethical forms, and in them a knowledge of God, why cannot we attain a knowledge of His existence in and through a direct apprehension of metaphysical forms?

If the monstration from design is not valid as an argument from the empirical design in nature, and nevertheless is a valid proof, it must be presented at a deeper and metaphysical level, as a monstration from the intelligibility of being.

Thus all the metaphysical proofs of theism demand a metaphysical insight which pierces beneath the level where ordinary experience and the sciences are at home. Since they depend upon the attributes of being, present in every form of experience, no extensive knowledge of particular facts is required to understand them.

For this reason they can be sufficiently grasped by people without any special knowledge or scientific training. This is particularly the case with the arguments from cause and from design. For the notions involved are obvious in ordinary experience. Those who lack a philosophic education or aptitude will indeed confuse the metaphysical causation and intelligibility here in question with the empirical causes and design apparent on the surface of their experience. They will therefore understand these proofs in a naïvely empirical fashion, attributing to the Divine cause the immediate production of an effect whose natural cause is unknown to them, or finding an immediate providential design in phenomena otherwise explicable, explaining, for example, the fact that sheep have woollen coats, by God's intention to supply men with warm clothing. Hence scientific advance by discovering natural causes is apt to make such people imagine that these proofs have been shaken. But though this crude formulation and, in general, the half-conscious and confused fashion in which the uneducated present to themselves philosophical proofs of theism exposes them to the assault of a pseudo-scientific rationalism, they do, in fact, possess a valid metaphysical insight, in itself, if unfortunately not in their minds, immune from rationalistic refutation. What is needed is to clear up what is obscure, confused, and merely implicit, in the manner in which these metaphysical insights are held. This, however, is in practice not easy. For the apparent strength of the rationalistic attack overawes the mind by its self-confidence and

wide acceptance. "But scientists who ought to know assure us that it isn't so".

Moreover, it is one thing to apprehend a metaphysical form, quite another to grasp it firmly and clearly.¹ The former is effected by the implicit philosophy of common sense, a metaphysical inlook ignorant of its nature, and unable to distinguish clearly the objects of which it is dimly aware. The latter task requires the fully conscious, trained, and concentrated inlook of the philosopher. And only this trained inlook can apprehend the metaphysical proofs of God's existence so clearly and firmly that it grasps their true nature and can therefore maintain them against the rationalist attacks which misconceive it.

Though metaphysical forms in their universality are simple and, unlike scientific forms do not present a labyrinthine complex of detail, owing to their distance from the level of sensible phenomena, they are dim and not easy to fix. To focus them clearly we must concentrate our inlook upon them, as the astronomer concentrates his vision to focus through the telescope a star dim in the remoteness of space. This effort of mental concentration, upon forms so distant from the outer forms of sensible objects with which our daily life and practical purposes are conversant, is particularly difficult to those who, like the Europeans of to-day, have been trained to an exclusive preoccupation with the latter. An intellectual eye, whose training has been exclusively in

¹ The clearness is however comparative. A metaphysical form belonging to this ultimate level of being cannot ever become so clear to the human mind as the definite, indeed quantitative, forms which are the object of scientific knowledge.

outlook, requires a special effort if it is to engage in a steady inlook. Most probably its owner will see nothing at first, or the object will be indistinct, and the task of fixing it firmly a painful mental strain. He is likely to lose patience and declare that there is nothing to be seen, or at anyrate nothing sufficiently clear for its nature to be made out. Nor will he accept other men's metaphysical insights. For most modern metaphysical systems have been fundamentally vitiated by an *a priori* epistemological prejudice, that some, if not most, categories of form, have no objective reference. An appeal to metaphysical authority will therefore not assist or replace but prevent insight. And whereas metaphysicians are fundamentally at variance precisely for lack of an agreed criterion of truth, science, despite disagreement on questions of ultimate interpretation which indeed border upon metaphysics, presents an imposing array of facts universally accepted. The modern is therefore disposed to reject metaphysics as subjective and confine objective truth to the sciences. He thus makes it impossible to see the metaphysical monstrations of theism.

And those who question the objective reference, even of scientific forms, far from accepting the truth of metaphysics, adopt, as we have seen, a more or less complete scepticism often cloaked by energeticism. The metaphysical insight, and therefore inlook, required for a sufficient apprehension of the proofs of theism is not easy for the majority of our contemporaries.

On the other hand, to attain the metaphysical insight which beholds the necessity of God's existence, scien-

tific knowledge is unnecessary, though a scientific training which does not illicitly introduce a defective metaphysic may be of assistance by the mental discipline it involves. The Aristotelian science of the Middle Ages was of little value and the temper of the age unscientific. Metaphysics, however, reached an achievement never since surpassed. At its best, as represented by such men as SS. Bonaventure, Albert, and Thomas, scholastic philosophy was a monument of that profound, accurate and subtle intellectualism which is the sole authentic rationalism.

Later, when the sciences began their triumphant progress, a nominalism which left no room for metaphysical truths, for these are universal and for nominalism the universal is but a convenient label under which to classify similar phenomena, had undermined and discredited scholasticism. And nominalism was succeeded by partial and conflicting systems which dissolved the unity and diminished the integrity of the intelligible world. As Professor Whitehead has pointed out, accumulation of empirical facts superseded the confident use of reason as a means of understanding the world, and the shape of the wood became invisible to eyes which could see only an increasingly extensive collection of trees. The keener sight of a pre-scientific age, trained in acute and subtle inlook, could descry fundamental forms of being, faint or wholly invisible to its successor. Comte was right when in his *Law of Three Stages* he taught that the age of metaphysics has given place to an age of positive science.¹

¹ See Dr. Wust *Naivëtat und Pietät*, pp. 155 sqq.

But he was mistaken in regarding the supersession of metaphysics by science as final or satisfactory. We might as well regard it as a satisfactory and final scientific achievement if biology were superseded by physics.

However difficult the process we must return to metaphysics, a profound and comprehensive metaphysics based on the use of inlook and acceptance of the metaphysical insights which it alone can bestow. It will then be once more possible to understand and accept the metaphysical proofs of theism.

We will therefore endeavour to look into the metaphysical depths and focus these outlines of metaphysical form, these fundamental aspects of being in which absolute Being comes into view as pre-supposed by these forms. An effort of metaphysical contemplation will be necessary, not easy to minds trained to look outwards rather than inwards, and impatient of what seem the insubstantial abstractions of metaphysics. But without it there is no metaphysical approach to God.

The first three of the five classic proofs of theism from motion (Change), efficient causation and possibilities, are varieties of the monstration of absolute from contingent being.¹ Every being and category of being that we experience,² is experienced as contingent. There is no object or event whose nature is such that it must exist or happen. The existence of the object or event

¹ See Fr. Martin D'Arcy, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 164-5. He however, also regards the fourth and fifth proofs as further varieties of the proof from contingent to absolute being.

² I prescind here from the religious experience of God, the reality and nature of which will be discussed later.

obviously depends upon—that is to say, is contingent upon—objects and events beyond itself. Because it is limited, it is relative to and conditioned by being other than itself, other objects, other events. These in turn are equally contingent on other objects and events. But the whole of reality cannot be an infinite series of contingents, objects and events dependent for their existence on others. For the mind cannot rest in a universal contingency and mutual relativity. There must be being which exists in its own right. The whole of existence cannot be hypothetical.

It may be replied that the absolute being which the mind is obliged to affirm is the whole of which all the contingent beings are parts. I grant, says our critic, that any particular being or condition of the universe is contingent, dependent upon some other being or condition of the universe, and that there must be an absolute unconditioned reality upon which in the last resort these contingent particulars depend. This absolute being, however, is not an Absolute which transcends these contingents and is other than any or all of them, but simply their sum total, the universe as a whole. To which I reply: the sum of contingent beings must itself be contingent. A sum is determined by its components. An infinity of apples cannot produce a pear, an infinity of contingents an absolute. And a sum is determined by, therefore is contingent upon each and all of its parts. Nor can any part of the sum total of being, for example its initial factor, be absolute and the remainder contingent upon it. For since this initial factor is part of the sum its nature and existence are

conditioned by, and thus contingent upon, the nature and existence of the remainder. It makes no difference whether this initial factor be conceived as an original condition of the universe or as some permanent category of limited being. In either case as the factor of a whole containing contingency, it must itself be contingent because it is related to what is admittedly contingent.

It may be replied that the alleged contingency is unreal. Because the whole is absolute the parts are not really contingent. They are partial aspects of the absolute whole and their existence and nature wholly determined by it. Because the seemingly contingent beings of our experience are in fact determined by the absolute whole they are not contingent. But the at least apparent contingency is a datum of experience. Undeniably objects and events appear to be contingent, to depend on what lies beyond themselves. Were it otherwise we could not have formed the notion of contingency. But the notion of contingent being implies a factor of contingency in the universe, be it only in the mind. If, however, the reality to which the mind belongs is absolute, not only as a whole, but throughout, in each and all of its parts, this contingency could not arise. For the least factor of contingency, even purely psychological, introduces contingency into the whole of which it is part. That whole cannot be totally absolute. If, however, we distinguish in this whole between the absolute and the contingent, the latter being declared unreal, as by the Indian *advaita Vedanta* for which the contingent being

of experience is but an illusion somehow produced by the sole reality, the absolute Brahman, the Absolute is no longer the whole of which the contingent is a part. There are two distinct categories of being, Absolute and contingent, the latter conditioned by but not conditioning the former. This, however, is precisely the theistic conclusion that contingent being implies an Absolute Being which transcends it and from which it derives whatever being it possesses. The *advaita Vedanta* is not pantheism but theopanism. Its error is not that it identifies God with the sum total of limited and contingent being. On the contrary its error is its denial of the reality of creatures, of contingent being.¹ Absolute being therefore cannot be a whole of which contingent being, whether in the universe or in human thought, is a part. It must altogether transcend the order of contingent being, and therefore the universe whose constituents are all finite and contingent. It cannot possess any being in common with contingent beings. The being of the latter must therefore be a comparative, though not, as the Vedanta appears to teach, a complete, unreality; a half-being between Absolute reality and nothingness. Contingent being is thus a reflection of Absolute Reality upon nothingness, its limited participation by nothingness, the shadow of God cast upon the void. The shadow, however, cannot be cast automatically by His mere existence as an object must cast a shadow when it checks the rays of the sun. For in that case God would not be Absolute. His Being would be conditioned by finite

¹ See Fr. Johannis' *To Christ Through the Vedanta*.

objects, inasmuch as He could not exist without their existence. Therefore, since there can be no contingency in the Absolute, contingent being must be created by God's free act.

The metaphysical contemplation of contingency has thus displayed the existence of a wholly transcendent Absolute, the free Creator of this contingent universe.

This abstract metaphysical apprehension of contingency as the nature of limited being and of the contrasted reality which it implies, Absolute being wholly other than the contingent being which depends upon it for its existence and nature, may be, and often is, accompanied by a concrete intuition of this Absolute Reality in its contrast with contingent being. From the nature of its Object this intuition is obscure. It may also be weak, even half-conscious, though it may be very powerful, even overwhelming. It may seem purely negative, nothing more than an acute awareness of the contingency of finite being. This experience of Absolute Being, be it positive or seemingly negative, always involves a more or less powerful realization of the comparative unreality, impermanence and emptiness of contingent being. When, however, the negative aspect of the experience occupies the field of consciousness, predominantly or exclusively, a sense of the vanity of all finite things will be felt more intensely. Such surely was Buddha's enlightenment, in which he perceived the emptiness, and therefore the inevitable suffering, of living creatures, the vanity of man's life and its aims and the path of deliverance from it. Soloviev was justified in regarding Buddhism as a

negative revelation of the Absolute, a precursor of its positive revelation in Platonism and more concretely in Christianity. For we cannot realize the contingency of finite being as a concrete and intolerable experience without intuition, however obscure, of the Absolute for which man has been made.

A being incapable of apprehending and enjoying the Absolute would not thus suffer from and rebel against contingency. That man suffers from it and rebels against it proves that he is aware, though he may not know it, of the Absolute. And the greater the suffering, the more violent the revolt, the more powerfully must the sufferer and rebel be aware of the Absolute, though he may not recognize even this powerful apprehension. Even if the primitive Buddhist conception of Nirvana was negative, the mere extinction of finite existence and its pain, or, as is more probable, its nature was left undetermined, it represented an ideal of absolute bliss, an experience, therefore, of absolute being.

Whether it takes a negative form as a powerful realization of the essential contingency of creatures and therefore of their limitation and emptiness, an experience in which the Absolute is given only by implication and the positive apprehension of it is indistinct and unrecognized, or a more positive form as explicit awareness of the contrasted Absolute which alone can fill the soul, this concrete apprehension of God as the transcendent Absolute must be distinguished from the abstract apprehension of the Divine Absolute presented in the metaphysical contemplation of con-

tendency. The former is a datum of religious experience, the latter of metaphysical intuition. In actual life the two are frequently combined. Indeed, their union is often so close that it is impossible, in the concrete, to distinguish between them. The concomitant religious experience bestows upon the metaphysical intuition a concreteness, vividness and power which it could not possess of itself, and thereby transfers the assent given to their common effect, knowledge of God's existence as the transcendent Absolute, from a merely notional into a real assent, a living conviction which takes possession of the entire soul.

*The First Thomistic Proof of God's Existence,
the Monstration from Motion to a First Mover
Itself Unmoved.*

This proof would be better called the proof from change to an immutable changer, for it does not depend on local motion. It would be equally valid if there were none.

It is a fact of experience that limited beings, whether mental or corporeal, substances or their qualities and states are subject to change. Change brought them into existence and they are constantly changing. These changes presuppose an agent which produces them. All being, however, cannot be changed and the product of change. There must be Being which is neither the product nor in process of change. For change is a passing away of being that existed before it and the coming into existence of being that did not exist pre-

viously. If, however, the agent of change wholly perished in the process, the process would be impossible, for there would be nothing that passed from the agent to its effect. There must, therefore, be something which remains unchanged throughout the process of change, the foundation of that change. A series of changing states implies a permanent subject which is a factor in their production—even when its action is little more than a reception, the predominantly passive response to a stimulus. Even substantial change in which one object is replaced by another presupposes some being in, and to which, the change occurs. When, for example, coal is burned and replaced by released chemicals these chemicals exist throughout the change. And if a body is disintegrated to its atomic constituents, these constituents persist throughout. Moreover, the chemicals and the atoms are respectively partial agents of the change, which would be impossible if they did not react to the stimulus of the solvent. Thus all change presupposes an unchanging factor, all becoming presupposes being. Whether object *A* is changed into object *B* or state *A*₁ of object *A* is changed into state *A*₂, some being and agency must persist from *A* to *B*, from *A*₁ to *A*₂. Objects are energies, actual energies constituted by the metaphysical combination of form and potential energy or 'matter'.¹ And their changing states are the successive assumption of different accidental forms by the energy in which their being consists. There is always an energy persisting throughout change and common to both its terms. In the case

¹ See my *Philosophy of Form*, pp. 14-15.

of accidental change, the change of object *A* from state *A*₁ to state *A*₂ this is the energy which composes *A*, and co-operates in effecting the change. In the case of substantial change in which energy-object *A* is succeeded by energy-object *B* the actual energies which constitute the immediate matter of the form of object *A*, for example, the factors of a chemical compound persist wholly or in part and enter into the new energy-object *B*, in whose production they thus co-operate. If, however, change always implies energy unchanged throughout the change, the entire complexus of changes which is the process of the universe involves an energy persistent and operative throughout. Otherwise a sheer discontinuity would supervene wherever an energy is replaced by a totally different energy. But there is no common energy which persists as the subject of the entire series of cosmic changes. Sooner or later every actual energy passes away, as the form which constituted it is replaced by another. Not even the atom is imperishable, and if its subatomic constituents are imperishable, which is by no means certain, they would seem in the last analysis to be not actual, but merely potential energies actualized by their position in a variable atomic pattern.¹ Nor is the persistence of form abstracted from the energy which embodies it a sufficient factor of permanence in concrete change. For a

¹ Whether this is in fact the case or whether the electron is a concrete energy object, a substance in its own right, must be decided, if at all, by physics not by metaphysics. Even if the latter should prove true, a substance in constant motion must be partly mutable. And we can hardly conceive that it contains an immutable core. Still less could we conceive that these hypothetical electronic energy-cores effect of their sole nature all the changes which by progressive complication and interaction have pro-

permanent concrete factor must persist throughout the series of changes, and form, apart from the energy embodying it, is abstract. But embodied in the concrete energy it is not permanent. One form succeeds another. There is, therefore, no permanent energy persisting and operative throughout the series of cosmic changes and common to the entire series, their common subject. Without such a permanent and persistently operative energy, the change of a universe abiding throughout the change is inconceivable. Experience, however, and its implication display an abiding yet changing universe. This abiding energy, therefore, which persists throughout the series of cosmic changes, but can not be found within that series as its abiding subject, must be sought beyond the universe and its changes. It must be an energy which transcends the universe, but supports the cosmic process of change, and produces it either immediately or through subordinate agencies which it moves and determines.

This energy cannot be itself subject to change, for it would be necessary to postulate a superior energy to support and produce this change and so *ad infinitum*. It must, therefore, be immutable and the original source of all change—in fact what is meant by the first mover.

No world soul purely immanent in the universe can

duced the universe, especially since of all actual being the electron confines most closely upon non-entity. The conservation of matter (energy) has no bearing on the issue of immutable finite substance. For even if absolutely true, which is uncertain, it is merely a law of quantity, expressing the fact that a numerical sum of substances (energies) is immutable. It does not prove that any individual unit of the sum is immutable.

account for its changes. For such a world soul would, as such, be affected by the changes of the cosmic body with which *ex hypothesi* it is bound up. And this inter-action between the cosmic body and its soul would require as its ground and source the action of a changeless energy beyond both.

Thus the contemplation of change has discovered as its presupposition an immutable absolute energy, immanent indeed in the cosmic process, but also wholly transcendent of it—in short, what we mean by God.

It may be objected that change is not due in the last analysis to a passage of energy from one object, or state of an object to another object or state, but to an energy generated in the process of change itself. An object, it may be maintained, does not simply transmit energy received from without, but is itself a source of new energy self-generated, whereby it changes itself and other objects in so far as they are passive, though they also change themselves in response to the stimulus from without. Thus objects are themselves first movers, and there is no need to postulate a transcendent first mover. Dialectical materialism has abandoned the older mechanist materialism for which change was simply the reception of motion imparted from without and ascribed to matter this self-movement, auto-dynamism as it is termed. A certain self-movement is, in fact, experienced in man's conscious life. In a measure we initiate our actions, whether bodily or the psychological changes we can provoke or modify—in particular the choices of our will. And it is precisely this auto-

dynamism which distinguishes the living organisms from inorganic matter whose movements seem to be received passively from without. Plato, indeed, regarded self-movement as the distinctive feature of soul as opposed to corporeal matter. Dialectic materialism has thus attempted to make materialism credible by investing matter with this psychical attribute, thereby ceasing to be strictly materialism,¹ and becoming an animism or vitalism—that is to say an energeticism. Nor are the Marxians altogether wrong in ascribing auto-dynamism even to inorganic matter. The response to stimulus of inorganic energy-objects must be regarded, not as the purely passive reception of an external motion, but an active response. What, on a higher level, is the response of a vital energy is here the far more restricted response of a lower type of energy. Lossky has aptly called inorganic objects psychoid, though not psychic. For the universe is throughout energy and displays a hierarchy of increasingly rich and complex energy-objects, as it ranges from the verge of non-entity to the highest spirits. Differences of level between them are reducible to diversities in their degree of reality—itself determined by the nature of the forms which constitute the energy-objects. Even the distinction between spirit and corporeal matter is a difference in their respective degrees of reality. Corporeal matter is spirit reflected on a lower level of being, spirit with diminished reality, a shadow of spirit, spirit minus. To be more precise the conscious life of animals is spirit

¹ See Berdaiev, *The General Line of Soviet Philosophy*.

minus, the subconscious life of plants conscious life minus, inorganic energy life minus, and mechanical energy chemical energy minus. But at all stages there is energy, whether spiritual, vital, chemical, or merely physical, and therefore some measure of self-movement. This auto-dynamism, however, does not dispense with the necessity for a transcendent first mover. For it is not absolute, original or complete. It is everywhere derivative and partial, therefore relative. Even the most auto-dynamic energy of which we have experience, the human spirit, did not bring itself into existence. And its power to change its own state is limited; nor can it bring into being from nothingness another energy-object, however low in the range of being. Any external change man can effect is but to move by the application of a stimulus, energies not his own. He cannot even change the state of his own consciousness or will without the co-operation of an external factor. And if the self-movement of the human spirit is subject to these intrinsic limitations, the self-movement of lower energy-objects must be more restricted. Nowhere is auto-dynamism the sufficient explanation of a change, or of any of its agents. Alike in the agent and in the responsive patient of change, in the initial and the final term of the process there must be an energy which is not the operation itself, the response to it, or their combination. This is the energy-object operative in whatever degree of auto-dynamic activity it may be capable of. And this energy-object is not itself auto-dynamism. Its operation is never entirely its own product, nor has it produced itself or its power to act. These

are received from without. Thus the self-movement of finite beings is a derived energy, auto-dynamic only in a secondary sense. If, however, the constituents of the universe are not primarily and absolutely auto-dynamic, the universe thus composed cannot be primarily and absolutely auto-dynamic. It is as impossible for the sum of secondary and relative auto-dynamisms to constitute a primary and absolute auto-dynamism, as it is for a sum of lumps of coal to compose a diamond. Whatever auto-dynamism is to be found in the universe is the operation of an energy received from without, not its own source. And the ultimate source of these secondary and derivative auto-dynamisms which are operations of energy received, products, therefore, of change, must be the Absolute Auto-dynamism and primary Energy which changes (moves) all energy-objects, but is itself unchanged. And this Absolute and Immutable Energy is God.¹

The reason why no finite being nor the sum of finite being can be a primary or absolute auto-dynamism is therefore its contingency. Since contingent being as such depends for its existence and *a fortiori* its operations upon being beyond itself, every contingent energy-object and, therefore, the universe of contingent energy-objects, must derive the energy in which its being consists, and every operation of that energy, directly or indirectly from an absolute Energy. The changes, therefore, which produce and modify finite

¹ In speaking of God as the Absolute auto-dynamism, it is not meant that He moves Himself. This would imply change and a dualism of mover and moved incompatible with His Absolute Immutability and Unity.

beings must be effected mediately or immediately by an immutable Energy beyond finite being. The monstration from change is thus a special application of the monstration from contingency. It is based upon a contemplation of contingent being as changeable and changing.

The conclusion that God is immutable is often rejected as incompatible with a living God on the ground that Life involves change. And it is on this ground that Berdaiev denies it. Admittedly, we cannot see how the attributes of immutability and living energy are compatible, but since infinite being is incomprehensible we cannot expect to reconcile all the attributes which we are compelled to ascribe to it. These attributes, however, are ascribed to God, only in so far as they express positive perfections. The limitations attached to them in creatures are not ascribed to God. Therefore immutability as attributed to God does not possess the negative aspect attaching to rest in creatures. It excludes the change from one state or mode of being to another, which is incompatible with the perfection of Absolute Being which must possess any being that a change could attain. But it does not exclude a fullness of living energy. In creatures rest involves inertia and confinement, because only by change can finite being escape its existing limitations and unite itself with being outside them. Absolute Reality, on the contrary, possesses the complete fullness of being. Because its energy is perfect and unlimited, its activity admits no increase. Even among creatures the higher and richer energies are most concentrated in an activity

so intense and so full that it seems rest. There is more energy in the steady contemplation of an intellect focused upon its object than in the various and constantly changing activities of a distracted mind. There is a more powerful energy in the steady flow of a current than in the splashes and foam of breakers. But there is more motion, more change, in the latter. Finite energies, therefore, tend to become calmer and less changing as they become more intense. Change and energy vary inversely.¹ This tendency points to the un-moving energy (*energeia akineseos*, as Aristotle termed it), which, just because it is the source and ultimate mover of all the changing energies of creatures, cannot itself be subject to change, but in its eternal present is pre-eminently whatever being change produces, modifies or destroys.

The Monstration from Sufficient Cause.

Until recently it was universally accepted as an axiom of thought, as it is still accepted by unsophisticated common sense, that every event must be the effect of a cause. Since an infinite regress of causes explains nothing because it never reaches a cause not the effect of a further cause, there must be a first cause not itself an effect. Since an effect is contingent upon its cause, causation is a special case of contingency and the monstration from it a special application of the monstration

¹ A lower and simpler energy may indeed be more persistent and more intense than a higher but more complex energy. The simple energy of a mineral concentrated in self-maintenance is more intense and less mutable than the complicated and constantly changing activities of an organism.

from contingent to absolute being. Or rather causedness and contingency coincide—the former being but the latter regarded from a special angle. For in so far as an object or state *A* is caused by another, *B*, it is contingent upon *B*, and in so far as *A* is contingent upon *B*, *A* is an effect of *B*.

The first cause of all effects cannot be their sum total, for since the sum is composed of its parts it is their effect. If the details of the universe are what they are, because the universe is what it is, the universe is what it is, because they are what they are. For the universe is the sum of its parts. If the universe were a perfect unit, of which particular beings and events were but aspects not really distinct, it might be possible to regard it as their sufficient ground. But there would be no real contingency, causation or process. Every object and event would be a necessary manifestation of the One. Nor could any conflict arise in such a universe. The objects and events of our experience, however, are evidently contingent, mutually distinct, and often in conflict. The sum, therefore, cannot be a perfect unity of which they are but aspects not really distinct from one another because not really distinct from this common unit. And being a sum, not a unit, it must be contingent upon the factors which compose it and which are concrete existents, not mere aspects of what is in reality absolutely one.

Certain modern philosophers, however, Lord Russell for example, contend that causation is a demand and invention of the human mind, not an objective fact. Actually there are but sequences of events occurring

with sufficient regularity to make it overwhelmingly probable that a particular event will be followed by a particular event. And for Kant causation was not a reality of the phenomenal order but one of the mental categories inevitably imported into the raw material provided by the senses to compose with it the universe of our actual experience.

We may admit that the sciences do not require the complete notion of causality. For their purpose it is sufficient to establish invariable sequences and co-existences of phenomena. Indeed, since the scientific ideal is a quantitative and mathematical description of phenomena, the notion of cause *in the strict sense* is alien to the sciences. What science seeks to discover is not the process itself by which event succeeds event, but its mathematical pattern. For science, and indeed intellectual knowledge generally, is concerned not with the energy of energy-objects and its operation, but with their form and the form which their operation displays. In a wider and more fundamental sense, however, every science is concerned with causes, for it seeks to discern the sufficient ground of phenomena in so far as it falls within its sphere of reference. For example, though the mathematical formula of a given sequence of phenomena does not express, absolutely speaking, its sufficient ground, it expresses its sufficient ground in so far as the sequence presents and is determined by an arrangement of mathematical quantities. Cause in the strict sense, however, is the sufficient ground of change, the dynamic, as opposed to the static sufficient ground. If, therefore, the notion of causality is un-

scientific, it is because the sciences are concerned, not with the change or process itself which of its nature eludes them, but with the form of the process which, like all form, is static. Hence the fact that the sciences make only a restricted use of the principle of sufficient ground and, ideally at least, do not employ the principle of dynamic sufficient ground, causation in the strict sense, is no argument against the reality of causation. And in practical experience which is not confined to a speculative knowledge of the forms of objects and events, but includes the concrete experience of their energies, causality, the principle that every change has a dynamic sufficient ground or cause, is apprehended as self-evident.

The Kantian view that causation, indeed sufficient ground generally, is a mental category imposed upon, not present in, the material received from without, contradicts experience. We apprehend causation in our experience of process as we apprehend static sufficient ground in our experience of form. In our own activities we experience causation immediately, in processes not our own we apprehend it as implied by the process. If in the face of this apprehension we refuse to admit that causality is as much an objective fact as a sense datum, we have no right to ascribe an objective reference to the latter. The Kantian distinction, within experience, between purely mental categories and purely sensible data has no foundation in experience whose unity it dissolves to satisfy an arbitrary epistemological prejudice. This prejudice, that all objective knowledge must be ultimately de-

rived from the senses, must consist of sense data and abstractions from them renders it impossible. For there is no item of knowledge, no perception of a sensible object, which does not involve an intellectual apprehension of form, and not only of the outer form of the object, which is not a mere sum of sense stimuli but given in, and through, them to the mind, but implicitly at least of fundamental metaphysical forms. Among these is sufficient ground and, therefore, when a process is apprehended causation in the strict sense.

This Kant perceived, as also that knowledge presupposes these apprehensions of metaphysical forms, his categories. But under the ban of the sensationalist prejudice he regarded these forms as imposed by mind upon the empirical data, not, as they are, apprehended by the mind in its empirical data.

Causation being thus a metaphysical implication of process, we apprehend in it the further implication of a first cause beyond process.

Another objection urged against the notion of cause is that the so-called cause depends upon its so-called effect. When the process is regarded as a whole it is seen that the cause could have operated only in the context which includes its effect, so that the latter conditions, and in so far causes, the operation and to that extent the nature of its cause. It is true that no limited cause can be the complete cause of its effect; for it cannot produce an effect out of nothing, and the nature of the effect to a certain extent determines the operation and thus the nature of the cause. An agent and its work are in a measure what they are, because

the effects are what they are. Indeed, if the sole sufficient ground in the universe were static, cause and effect would be completely inter-dependent and interchangeable. There would be no process, no cause in the strict sense, but a unit analysed into its aspects, the former being the sufficient ground of the latter, the latter reciprocally of the former. This, however, would be a purely formal universe without change or concrete difference of parts. It is the ideal order of forms in the Divine Mind. It is *not* the actual universe of contingent distinct and interacting objects. In this universe the static sufficient ground is never the sole or in the concrete the sufficient ground of phenomena. It is but their formal aspect. The concrete phenomenon, being the manifestation of an energy-object, involves a dynamic as well as a static sufficient ground. Here, however, cause and effect are not equally inter-dependent, much less inter-changeable. If the relationship between the solar rays and their effect upon a plant could, theoretically, be stated by a mathematical equation in which it would be indifferent whether we began with the formula expressing the quantum of solar energy involved or the formula expressing the quantum of vegetable energy, the equation would not express the relationship of cause and effect between the two concrete energies. And for this concrete relationship cause and effect are not interchangeable. The growth of the plant does not affect the action of the sun's rays to the degree in which their action affects the former.

Thus in true causation, the dynamic sufficient ground

of a phenomenon, the cause and its effect are distinct and not equally inter-dependent. That there is a measure of inter-dependence is proof that no created cause can be a perfect cause producing the entire effect. Alone the first cause is a perfect cause, the source of the entire being of its effects. Where, on the other hand, there is no causation in the strict sense, because no process, and the sufficient ground is static, that is, in the purely formal and intelligible aspect of reality there is no difference between one factor and another in respect of casual relationship. Every factor conditions the others, and all are necessary constituents or aspects of a more comprehensive form which determines their nature. If, therefore, there could be an exclusively formal and intelligible universe without process and therefore without a dynamic sufficient ground, cause in the strict sense, a first cause would be superfluous. For it would be its own sufficient ground, determining itself in every detail, a unit of which every detail is but an aspect. Those who deny a first cause beyond the universe are logically compelled to regard the actual universe as such a purely formal whole in which process and multiplicity are unreal, the illusory appearance of a perfect unity underlying them. But a purely formal universe is impossible. For a form can be realized in the concrete only in an actual energy which it constitutes by actualizing the potential energy which is its matter. And this actualization is a process. Moreover it involves a factor of unintelligibility due to the matter which the form actualizes. For this reason a science which explains the universe or any department of it without an unintelli-

gible residue is impossible. That science can dispense with causation and therefore with an appeal to the first cause, while enlarging constantly its discoveries of formal structure, is due to the fact that it is confined to this formal structure and cannot explain the energetic aspect of reality. It is for this reason that physics, while still employing the term energy has emptied it of all dynamic content and uses it as a misleading term for a particular aspect of the quantitative structure of physical phenomena, that is of the formal mathematical structure of physical energy-objects and their relationships. Nor can this purely unintelligible and formal order exist by itself, as Plato seems to have held. For that which exists in the concrete cannot be an abstract form, intelligibility, or nature. Such a purely formal universe can exist only in God. It is His Divine Wisdom in which all forms are eternally present and eternally identical with His all-embracing Unity. The actual universe with its composition of being and becoming, form and matter, intelligibility and unintelligibility, presupposes therefore a Being in which form and energy, essence and existence, intelligibility and concrete reality are identical, from which the composite universe of form and energy derives its existence and its nature. And such a Being is God.

Monstration from Possible and Necessary Being

This is yet another aspect of the monstration from contingent being. All contingent being involves a factor of possibility. Its existence is not necessitated by its

nature and it is susceptible of becoming other or otherwise than it is. The entire order of limited being is an order in which possibility is mingled with actuality. Indeed in as much as the nature of an object does not necessitate its existence or its actual condition, this dualism of possibility and act enters into its metaphysical composition. The energy-object is constituted by the actualization by its form of a potential energy, its matter, and any given state or operation of an energy-object is its actualization in a particular respect by an accidental form of which the object is the matter. As we ascend the ladder of being lower energy-objects, themselves compounded of matter and form, are the matter of higher forms, elements, for example, of chemical forms in a chemical compound, chemical compounds, of organic forms in a living organism. Form is necessary, for a form must be what it is, matter potential, for it need not be actualized. Their compound, therefore, is a compound of necessity and possibility. In as much as an object (or state of an object) exists, it is necessarily what it is. But in as much it need not have come into existence but might have remained an unrealized possibility like those objects and states which might have but have not come into existence, its existence is not necessary, but a possibility which for some extrinsic reason and by the action of an external agent has been realized. Possibility, however, implies and depends upon a prior necessity. Being which is merely possible, which can but need not exist must be brought into existence by being which does actually exist, and to that extent is necessary. But since this actual being

is itself but an actualized possibility, the realization of its possibility required in turn another actual existent. Proceeding along this line we never reach an object simply necessary, not a realized possibility depending for its existence on another realized possibility. There must therefore be a Being which is purely and wholly necessary with no admixture of possibility, on which the possibility inherent in every limited being depends in the last resort for its realization. This perfectly necessary being must be a being in which form, the necessary principle which actualizes possibility in finite beings, and energy, the concrete actuality and object are identical. That is to say, in this Being essence, the formal factor of being, must be identical with existence, the actual factor. Such a being is what we mean by God.

It may be replied that this perfectly necessary being does not transcend the universe but is that universe as a whole. The universe as a whole, it is argued, is necessary and determines its parts. Granted that the nature of a particular object does not necessitate its existence, the nature of the universe necessitates it, though since we cannot comprehend the universe, we may not see the necessity. But the mere sum of beings partly possible cannot be absolutely necessary. If possibility enters into the parts, it cannot be eliminated from their sum. "But the alleged possibility in the parts is an illusion arising from our ignorance of the whole." Possibility is a fact of experience. We are aware of unrealized possibilities, that what might have been is not, that what is need not have been. If this experience of possibility is an

illusion, how did it arise in a world absolutely necessary? Moreover we experience the passage of possibility into actuality. Nor does the former differ from the latter simply as a mental image or idea from a concrete object. For we imagine and conceive objects and events which we know to be impossible. Possibility, therefore, exists as an object of experience distinct alike from impossibility and from actuality. The answer gives to the problem of determinism and freedom does not decide this ultimate issue. If there is freedom there must be real possibility in the universe. But even if, for the sake of argument it were granted that there is not, though on this hypothesis the actualization of particular possibilities would always be necessary, that necessity would not be due to the possibility realized. Though the evolution of a particular plant is necessary, it is not necessitated by the nature of that plant. Under other circumstances the possibility of existence inherent in the nature of the plant would not have been realized. The plant is thus a realized possibility, as contrasted with the unrealized possibility of a plant which might have been evolved under different conditions. And a universe consisting of the realization, even the necessary realization, of a selection from an infinite number of possibilities, contains a potential factor, the possibilities realized. It cannot derive necessity from its constituents which are not intrinsic necessities but realized possibilities. It cannot therefore be an intrinsic necessity but a realized sum-total of possibilities. Its realization must therefore depend upon being that is intrinsically necessary,

not simply a realized possibility. Moreover, and at this point, the monstration from possibility merges into the monstrations from motion (change) and causation, the actualized possibilities of the universe are not all actualized at any given moment. There are possibilities no longer realized, possibilities as yet unrealized. A possibility, however, can be actualized only by that which is itself actual. But only a portion of the universe is at any time actual. At no time does the universe exist as a whole. Since, however, that which does not exist cannot actualize possibility, the universe as a whole cannot actualize its possibilities. These must be actualized successively by the parts of the universe as they themselves are successively actualized. It may be replied that an underlying substance persists throughout the series of more superficial actualizations and determines it. If, however, this substance is a part of the universe to which the series of actualizations belongs, it must be, at least accidentally, modified by the actualizations which it effects, as a man is accidentally modified by putting on a succession of garments. This hypothetical substance would realize possibilities of existing in a particular way, as a man realizes the possibility of assuming a particular appearance when he puts on a suit. It could not therefore be at any point wholly actualized but would possess possibilities of accidental modification. And these actualizations could not be due solely to the substance. For it was in potentiality with respect to them and something already actual is required to realize the possibility.

The subject is not the sufficient agent in the process of dressing. The physical energies contained in the composition of the clothes must co-operate with his activity in putting them on. And other factors, conditions of the environment, physiological and psychological activities within the man himself must also co-operate, if he is to put on the clothes and thus actualize the possibility of this accidental modification. So would it be with our supposed substance. The successive modifications, even if superficial and accidental, it would undergo, as it put on the garments of possibilities successively realized would be actualizations of possibilities in itself, possibilities of being thus modified. What already actual would have actualized them? Not the substance alone, for it was not previously actualized in this respect. Thus neither the universe as a whole nor any part of it can actualize of itself the possibilities actualized. They must be actualized in the last resort by a Being outside the universe into which no possibility enters, since this Being, God, is wholly actual. His action is His Substance. Otherwise His being would be modified by it, and so far potential. God therefore is Pure Actuality (the *Actus purus*).

As the sole Being without any factor of possibility and therefore the primary and absolute Realizer of all realized possibilities, God is the primary and the sole perfect Cause. For a cause is the sufficient reason of realizing a possibility. And since change is in its positive aspect, the actualization of possibility, God as the primary and the sole perfect realizer of possibility is the primary and the sole perfect changer (mover).

Thus the monstrations from change, causation, and possibility converge as aspects of the fundamental monstration from contingent to absolute being. For a contingent being is a realized possibility not a necessary being. And a mutable being is contingent. If it were immutable, it would necessarily be and remain what it is in virtue of its nature, and not only because and so long as it actually is what it is. And a contingent being is mutable because it is dependent for its existence not upon its nature but upon external factors, and it could not remain what or as it is, were the latter to vary. And a contingent being is the effect of a cause because dependent on an external agency for its production and preservation. When, therefore, we contemplate the contingency of finite being in its various aspects we apprehend in every case as its presupposition and implication an Absolute Being transcendent of all finite Being and its ground and source, in a word, God.

Argument from the Degrees of Being

This argument is stated as follows by St. Thomas:
“The fourth way of proof is based upon the degrees to be found in objects. For we find in things a more and a less good, true and noble, and similarly with other things. But more and less are predicated of different objects, according as they approach in diverse degree to something which is greatest, as that is hotter which approaches closer what is supremely hot. There is therefore something which is truest, best and most

noble and consequently supremely real. For the truest things are the most real."

As usually stated this monstration is not convincing. For there is no such thing as a supreme degree of heat or length. Why then must there be a best and a truest being? And in any case since the supreme goodness and truth, whose existence it is proposed to establish, is infinite the greater and lesser approach to it of a finite good or truth is rather a paradox which the theist must indeed accept, since evidently a better man is more godlike than a worse, than a fact on which a proof of theism can be founded. The argument from degrees of being, therefore, as stated above, is not a monstration but at best an indication, of theism—the scale of degrees of goodness, for example, pointing upwards to a supreme good as their presumable crown.

It is, however, possible to state the argument in such a way that it is not open to these objections. At first sight the argument which I shall propound seems remote from the degrees of being, for it proceeds from the dual aspects of form as a universal. Form as such is universal even when the form of an individual object. For it is intrinsically, though not actually, capable of an infinity of possible embodiments.

There are, however, two distinct types of universal, two aspects of form as universal. One is abstract and the object of clear intuition, the other in a sense concrete, and the object of obscure intuition. The former, expressed by the universal concept, represents what is common to all the particulars, the embodiments of

the form. For example, the universal felinity represents the form common to all varieties of cat and all individual cats. We may call this the abstract universal.

The second type of universal represents the fullness of the essence, the perfection of the form of which the particulars imperfectly partake. The universal felinity represents in this aspect not that which is common to all cats but the fullness of feline nature in its entire scope, the perfection of the form cat of which each variety and individual partakes imperfectly. To express its fullness of content as contrasted with the abstract universal, we may call it the concrete universal.

This concrete universal is the Platonic idea, the abstract universal, the universal of Aristotle. Indeed these two types of universal are respectively the cornerstones of Platonism and Aristotelianism.¹ Since only the abstract universal the form, common to all the particulars which exemplify it, can be the object of clear intuition and therefore of conceptual definition, it alone can be employed in the sciences. Aristotle was justified in rejecting Plato's attempt to make a scientific employment of his concrete universal. The latter can, however, be obscurely apprehended in the

¹ If this is the case, the opposition between the Platonic and the Aristotelian doctrine of universals is unreal and Aristotle's criticism of Plato on this point fails of its mark. For the two philosophers are, in fact, concerned with different things. Plato's universal being the concrete universal in the sense explained above is not Aristotle's universal, which is the abstract universal. On this fundamental question Platonism and Aristotelianism are not alternatives but complements. And this surely is one of the principal reasons why neither has succeeded in vanquishing the other, and the complete philosophy, the *philosophia perennis*, must combine and harmonize both.

concrete objects which give it partial embodiment and expressed indefinitely and partially by a concrete example. But this is the function not of scientific reasoning but of æsthetic intuition and its artistic expression. Science, therefore, is concerned with the abstract and Aristotelian universal, art with the concrete universal, the Platonic idea. By abstraction we can attain a definite concept of the form common to all oaks, or rather of certain aspects of it, and express it by the scientific definition of an oak. But of the perfect nature, the ideal form of the oak, which no actual oak can fully represent—oak as a concrete universal or Platonic idea we can attain at most a dim apprehension, a vague, if powerful, awareness. This is useless for the purposes of science. It can, however, be presented and thus partly expressed by art. For the artist embodies his obscure intuition of this ideal oak by so representing an oak tree as to convey in and *beyond* the particular oak depicted an apprehension of this idea of oak in its transcendental fullness of oakhood, the universal and ideal inner form of oak presented in and through the outer form of an individual oak which imperfectly embodies it.¹

Whereas the abstract universal represents the minimum of a form, the lowest common denominator of its embodiments, the concrete universal represents its maximum, the perfect essence of which every embodiment falls short. But the more perfect the embodiment of a form the closer does the form thus embodied approach

¹ For this account of the concretes or ideal universal and its relation to æsthetic intuition I am largely indebted to my son, Christopher Watkin.

the perfection of its exemplar. The exemplar is thus a norm which determines the degree in which a particular embodiment exceeds the bare minimum of the abstract universal and approaches its perfection. And this scale of lesser and greater realization witnesses to the reality of the exemplar that in itself evades clear grasp. Though we can arrive at nothing more definite than a vague awareness of such ideal essences as perfect oakhood, felinity, or straightness, their existence is implied as our standard of comparison, when we assert that one oak or cat is a finer specimen of its kind than another, one line straighter than another. These exemplary or concrete universals, however, cannot exist *in vacuo*. Where do they exist? Not in nature, where every embodiment of a form is imperfect. Nor in the human mind, incapable of grasping them clearly. They must therefore exist in a transcendent Being in which they possess a concrete realization. Since this realization is absolute, the being in which they are realized must be absolute, and this absolute transcendent Being is what we mean by God.

There are, however, two categories of form. There are forms essentially limited—closed forms. Such are the forms of corporeal objects and qualities and spiritual objects and qualities intrinsically finite, for example, the nature of the human soul or adoration. These closed forms are realized in God, not formally in their essential limitation but pre-eminently inasmuch as their positive content is contained in Him. And they exist in God's knowledge of them, ideas in the Divine wisdom. There are, however, other forms which involve

no essential limitation. These are the primary attributes of being, for example, truth and goodness. They exist formally in God, aspects of His Nature.¹ The ultimate form or nature is being itself. Here the gulf is widest between the minimum of being common to all things that exist, being as an abstract universal and the exemplary fullness and perfection of being, being as a concrete universal. As we have just seen the degrees in which a form is realized upwards from the bare minimum of the abstract universal presuppose the reality of its ideal perfection, the concrete universal. Therefore the degrees in which being is realized upwards from the bare minimum common to all beings presupposes the reality of the ideal perfection of being. And this is the Absolute Being, God.

From another point of view the degrees of being experienced in the universe afford an indirect monstration of theism. For they exclude its alternative, the identification of absolute reality with a whole of which finite objects are parts. This may take the irreligious form of identifying the absolute with the empirical universe as a whole. This is pantheism in the strict sense, the doctrine that all is God. Or it may take the religious form of regarding the empirical universe as an illusory appearance of God, the sole

¹ Since the distance between the Divine Attributes, as participated by creatures and as they are in God, is infinite, though these attributes are formally in God, as they are in creatures they are not formally in Him but only analogously. Created goodness, truth, and being are only analogous to the Divine Truth, Goodness, and Being, and although goodness, truth and being are predicable of God in a supereminent fashion, as they are in creatures they are not predicable of Him. Moreover in God all these attributes are identical with His Essence.

reality. This is theopanism, the doctrine that God is all.

Both are excluded by the degrees of reality. For whether God were all or all were God, there could be no room for the latter. All things must be equally real because equally divine or equally unreal, if God alone is real.

A strict monism, therefore, whether immanentist or transcendent, denies the degrees of value and reality which we actually experience. Nor is it compatible with the conflict and the evil which are equally undeniable. If everything is alike divine everything must be equally good. And if everything in this empirical order is illusion, a cosmic dream, how did the dream arise? And why should it be so often a nightmare? Moreover, there is not only a scale of reality and value, it has come into existence by a progressive production of higher realities and values. In a world where there was nothing but inorganic energy life arose, and after life consciousness and mind. This progressive realization of higher degrees of being could not occur in a world in which the being from which the process began was a reality and a value, at least equal to the highest and most perfect produced later. If, on the other hand, the process and the values it produces are illusion, the process is unreal and insignificant. Thus the degrees of being and their progressive production, by disproving monism, whether pantheism or theopanism, furnish an indirect proof of theism.

Reason rejects an absolute monism. For the universe contains distinct beings, more or less real, with their

mutual limitations and conflicts. It equally rejects an absolute dualism or pluralism. For it cannot account for the common element present in all beings, the fact that they all possess some measure of reality, belong to a universe in which they are inter-related and are all in principle possible objects of knowledge. We are compelled to affirm a dualism (pluralism) subordinate to, and dependent upon, an ultimate unity. There must be Absolute reality and a half-reality, itself composed of various degrees of partial reality, which the absolute Reality has produced between Itself and nothingness—more real than nonentity or mere possibility, less real than Itself. This is finite being, compounded, of Infinite Being, reflected and participated and nothingness, as finite number is the product of infinity and zero.¹

That is to say, the universe with its degrees of finite reality is the creation of a perfect and Absolute Reality which we term God. And since the highest finite reality which we know is spiritual and personal, God must be not less but more than spiritual and personal.

The Monstration from Design, or the Teleological Proof

Discussing the difficulties occasioned by the modern scientific outlook, we have already spoken of the teleological argument for theism—the argument based upon

¹ There can be no actual compound of Infinite Reality and nothingness. Reflected and participated being is finite being, essentially distinct from Infinite Being. Nor is nothingness a positive factor in finite being. It is a purely negative factor of deficiency whereby finite being is comparatively, though not absolutely, unreal.

the evidence of design in the universe. For it is widely believed to have been discredited by the scientific explanation of natural phenomena. Adaptations once regarded as evidence of an intelligent purpose are explained as products of unintelligent factors, such as the effect of environment or survival value in the struggle for existence upon variations due to chance, or at most, to a purely immanent vital force. If not a mechanical operation of physical forces, at any rate a vital impulse inherent in nature, is regarded as a sufficient explanation of the teleology, the adaptation of biological structure to the needs and environment of an organism, throughout the vegetable and animal kingdoms. Moreover, the waste, maladjustment, and internecine conflict, the failure alike of individuals and species, the stunted and distorted development to be witnessed everywhere, the suffering and the slaughter and the biological success of such destructive organisms as disease germs and parasites present the impressive and disturbing spectacle of a chaos in which no intelligent purpose can be discerned, that balances, if it does not outweigh, the evidence of design. If, for example, the structure of a plant displays a complex and subtle adaptation to its environment this elaborate mechanism is destroyed by a parasite or the competition of rival plants. If the adaptation to the orchid of the fungus, without which it cannot reproduce its kind, points to an intelligent designer, what of the 'adaptation' to the tree of the ivy which strangles it? If the earth is adapted to the organisms which inhabit it, what of the quasi-infinity of worlds

on which life is impossible? Is there a tree in the virgin forest that has reached the perfection of its kind without disease, check, or distortion at any point? Is not the fossil record a record of abortive developments, and blind alleys, forms of life which perished from maladaptation to their environment?

The naïve teleology, too popular with pious folk in the past, which saw nothing but intelligent and benevolent design in the universe, and moreover the design of promoting human welfare, has been discredited. We can no longer suppose that everything in the universe, or even on this planet, has been directly designed for man's service. But this anthropomorphic teleology was not particularly religious. Religion at its purest has always declared that the end of creation is not the welfare of man but the glory of God. Nor has it encouraged the belief that God's purpose is so easily legible on the surface of the world. It has taught us that 'His judgments are an abyss' and that no man 'hath known the mind of the Lord' because 'His decrees are incomprehensible and His ways unsearchable'. To discover design in the world and its history is one thing, to state in detail what that design is quite another.

On the other hand, that we cannot fully make out a design, and at many points there is no evidence of any, does not alter the fact that design has been discovered. If a picture is in such darkness that only a small portion of its subject can be made out, the fact that this portion displays an intelligible design is sufficient proof that the canvas is not covered with

random splashes of paint but by a coherent scene which an artist has intended to represent. If the theist cannot explain the apparent lack of design in the universe, the atheist and the agnostic cannot explain the evident design in it. And whereas the design proves intelligent purpose, the lack of discoverable design does not disprove it. For it may be due to our ignorance. If indeed the design visible in nature were extremely scanty, it might be ascribed to chance, as we might ascribe an apparent design on a dark wall, were it sufficiently minute, to a chance arrangement of its colouring matter. But the amount of design discoverable in nature is too great for this explanation. And in fact not even the Marxian materialist attributes the design in nature to the purely mechanical operation of chance. He admits that a mechanism implies a purpose which it fulfils. But he endows the natural machine with an intrinsic purpose. It is a machine which somehow designs and operates itself. We have already stated the metaphysical objections to this immanentism. And, apart from these, there is no evidence that the organic machine, the plant, or even the animal is conscious of the elaborate operations and adaptations which it carries out to fulfil a purpose of which it has obviously no knowledge. And if we go further in the spiritualist direction than the autodynamism of the dialectical materialist and postulate an intelligent but purely immanent life force or world soul to explain a teleology which we cannot reasonably ascribe to its individual subjects, the problem arises why its operation has been so slow, hesitant, and

partial, and so often ending in a blind alley of fixation or extinction.¹ An intelligent man reaches his object faster and more surely. The delay, and the failures, may be ascribed, as by M. Bergson, to the obstacle presented by a matter which resists the flow of life and crystalizes it into rigid shapes. Thought, however, rejects this ultimate dualism. Since *ex hypothesi* this life flow and the resistant matter interact and combine to constitute the world, there must be a common principle from which both derive, and on which both depend. If this ultimate common principle is the whole of which life with its innate teleology and this mechanical matter are both parts, this whole must be itself a duality of purpose and blind mechanism, intelligence and unintelligence. But these two factors, being opposites, cannot be identical. Therefore the dualism subsists and postulates a further common principle to unite and explain it—an infinite regress. If, on the other hand, the ultimate principle is one of the two factors, namely teleological life, and the mechanical factor is its product, how does the former produce the latter, and how are they related?

If the teleological life is essentially immanent in the mechanical matter which it produces by the intrinsic necessity of its nature, so that it is a cosmic soul of which the matter is the body, an intelligent and purposive being is tied to an unintelligent mechanism,

¹ This difficulty, it is true, may also be raised against belief in the creative purpose of God. Since, however, created nature is infinitely more remote from Divine than a body from its life or soul its inherent deficiency of being may well constitute an obstacle to the realization of an intelligible purpose which the body of an organism would not be likely to oppose to its vital purpose, and which the bodies of individual organisms do not in fact present.

being obliged to produce it and unable to exist without it.

Unintelligence is thus a necessary condition of the very being of intelligence. This, however, is a paradox which demands explanation. Moreover, this intelligent soul and unintelligent body thus necessarily linked are parts of a wider whole, as the human soul and body are parts of the complete man. This involves that ultimate dualism which we have found untenable. If, however, the teleological life transcends the material principle, as a creator his creatures, it cannot be identified with the life immanent in the material universe. For this does not wholly transcend matter but is bound up with it and in so far dependent upon it. The design found in the universe cannot therefore be produced by an immanent life force. Nor does life as we know it in the subhuman order possess the conscious intelligence required to explain the purpose it displays. This must be due to a principle consciously intelligent or rather superconsciously superintelligent. And this principle is God.

Forces, therefore, belonging to a lower order of being cannot produce by their sole operation, being of a higher order. No evolution of inorganic energies, however lengthy and complicated, can produce organic life. Nor can any evolution of organic life produce mind.

A school of evolutionary philosophers ascribe the appearance of a higher order of being and value to what they term emergent evolution. At a particular stage of evolution, they tell us, there emerges from

the complex interplay of forces or objects of a lower order being of a higher order. Organic life emerges from the inorganic, mind from unintelligent life. This is a true description of what occurs in the course of evolution. When the development of lower energies has reached a certain complexity a higher form of being supervenes, emerges. But it is simply description, not explanation. Why does this higher type of being emerge? The less cannot produce the more, the effect exceed its cause. The higher degree of value and reality—organic life, for example, or mind—which comes into existence must derive elsewhere. The utmost which the development of forces of an inferior order can effect is to produce the conditions under which a higher kind of reality can enter from without the context to which they belong. They can but prepare the necessary matter to receive a form of a higher order.

That form must be derived from a transcendent ideal order. And since such an order cannot subsist in itself, these supervening or emergent forms must be derived from a concrete intelligence, the Divine Wisdom.

Evolution and creation are therefore not alternative explanations of the origin of species or orders of being, but complementary aspects of the same cosmogonic process. Phenomenally there is nothing but evolution and the emergence in its course of new and higher types and orders of being. Noumenally, that is in the underlying metaphysical reality, there is a creation of these new types and orders. In virtue of God's single

and eternal creative fiat, whenever the development of energies on a given level has reached a particular complexity a new and higher form supervenes from the ideal order of form in the Divine Mind, upon this complex which is its matter. The complex is, as it were, a lens which focuses and catches the form in question from the Divine Word, a ray from the Divine Light. But the entire dispensation under which this occurs is the ordinance of God's Wisdom and the development of the lower energies which, by preparing its matter, conditions the entrance of the new form into the phenomenal order is an operation of the Divine Will supporting and moving these energies.

The immanent teleology displayed in the course of evolution is thus the manifestation and effect of a transcendent teleology, God's creative Purpose.

The lack of design, shown by the tardiness, resistance and maladaptation, the failure, conflict, frustration and waste, which in the evolution of the world, the growth of individual organisms, and the mutual relations between creatures, contrasts with the striking evidences of design is not wholly an illusion due to our ignorance. Though there cannot be an ultimate dualism of intelligence and blind mechanism, a secondary dualism is undeniable. The universe displays design and lack of design, intelligence and unintelligent force. But this secondary dualism is to be expected in a half-world compounded of form and matter, actuality and possibility. The Absolute Reality is pure actuality, pure intelligence and intelligibility. The creature being but actualized possibility, formed matter

cannot be perfectly intelligent or intelligible. It must display a factor of non-entity, of imperfection, and unintelligibility, hence a defective teleology. There must be a measure, greater or less, of resistance to form and therefore to design. No form can be perfectly received and embodied. As we ascend the ladder of being this element of formlessness, unintelligibility, and of mechanism as opposed to purposive activity, progressively diminishes. The teleology of an organism contrasts strikingly with the mechanical reaction of an inorganic force to external stimulus, though even in the latter case the reaction is not purely passive and subserves a wider purpose, for example the construction of a mineral. Form which is design in the sense of pattern is the principle of design in the sense of purpose.

Thus teleology, a purposiveness, objectively intelligent on the inorganic levels of being, instinctively and more or less subconsciously intelligent on the organic levels, consciously intelligent in rational man is a function of form. The higher the form the greater is the teleology. The vitalist mistakenly seeks the principle of teleology in a life force. Not energy but form is teleological. For form is the intelligible factor of created being and on the higher levels the ground of consciousness and intelligence.

Life is energy at a particular level, and energy derives its teleology from form. For without form not only does it lack any determinate character, it is not actual but merely possible energy. It owes to its form its existence and nature, and *a fortiori* its purposiveness

or intelligence, whether merely objective, instinctive, or conscious.¹

The metaphysical factor which is the complement of form in the energy objects and its co-constituent, namely potential energy or matter, an indeterminate possibility of receiving form, is the ground of the lack of purposiveness and the unintelligibility which restricts the teleology in nature. The energeticism which ascribes to energy (life), the design visible in the universe, implicitly attributes this teleology to matter, the factor in virtue of which created energy is not pure form. It thus ascribes intelligibility, intelligence and purposiveness precisely to the unintelligible and unintelligent factor of being.

In man, as a rational being, teleology should reach its maximum. In fact humanity displays intelligent purpose to a degree unapproached by any other denizen of the planet. Unfortunately, man also displays a folly which justifies Shaw's jibe that the earth is the asylum of the universe. What more baffling than the picture presented by mankind to-day? On the one hand intelligent and co-operative purpose has yoked the forces of nature to man's service so successfully that he could organize, if he would, a society and a way of life providing for all the aspects of his nature an ordered satisfaction. On the other hand, mankind is divided into hostile groups, bent on exploiting this control of natural forces to seize or secure a selfish predominance,

¹ Intelligence, and therefore purposiveness, is probably never purely objective, even in organic matter. A subinstinctive striving to maintain its being would seem to impel its apparently random reactions to external stimuli.

though it should involve the collapse of civilization in the ruin of war. Whence this combination of intelligence and lunacy, of reasoned purpose and blind passion? It is due partly to invincible stupidity, partly to the abuse of free will. These in turn arise from the inherent limitations of man's finite being. Because a material factor enters into his metaphysical composition, the resultant deficiency of being finds expression in corresponding restrictions of intelligence and rational purpose. Hence man's free will is liable to abuse, and a universal liability to make the wrong choice renders it inevitable that the wrong choice will, in fact, often be made.¹

Christianity indeed teaches that hereafter a supernatural vision of God and union with Him will confirm the will of the saved in good, abolishing the liability to error and sin involved by man's natural limitations. If, however, goodness is not to be merely automatic, this perfection must be freely merited by the right use of a freedom liable to be abused. The supreme and supernatural freedom, not to be able to sin must, normally, be the reward of a right employment of the lower natural freedom, 'to be able to sin and to refrain from sinning'. The Divine purpose for humanity requires a preliminary scope for the factor of irrationality and comparative purposelessness to produce its effects.

It would be ludicrous to present these brief remarks as an answer to the great objection against the tele-

¹ See Fr. Rickaby, *In An Indian Abbey*.

² *Ibid.*

ological proof of theism, the problem of evil. They merely indicate a fundamental line of approach towards it. Any answer the profoundest thinker could make would leave the mystery of evil unsolved. It could but suggest the direction along which the solution must lie. Since, however, evil is a privation of positive values which ought to exist, it is secondary to, and dependent upon, the positive reality which it restricts. It is the shadow of good, which it presupposes, as the shadow presupposes the object which casts it and the light which it intercepts. The Divine light of pure Form, perfect Wisdom and Goodness, is broken by the limitations of the finite beings among which it is refracted. These limitations, as we have seen, are due to the material factor, the element of mere possibility, that is, of comparative non-entity in their composition. Though merely possible being is not simply nothing, it has no actual existence. In virtue of this comparative unreality, this deficiency of being, matter, in the metaphysical sense, not corporeal matter which is formed matter and therefore actual, is the source of evil. Evil thus arises inevitably—the shadow attendant upon limited good. In the perfection of the supernatural order the reception of God's unlimited Being and Value abolishes the shadow of evil, as when light is received by a transparent body no shadow is cast. This, however, is a promise of Christian faith, not a fact of experience. Until the day of eternity breaks the shadows cannot flee.

If, therefore, the theist is faced with the insoluble mystery of evil, though not without hints of its solu-

tion, it is the problem of the shadow. The atheist and the agnostic are faced with a weightier problem, for which they have no answer, the problem of the substance which casts that shadow, the problem of good. They have but exchanged the lesser for the greater, the secondary for the primary problem.

Thus the teleological monstration of theism is a monstration from the intelligibility of form as implying an absolute intelligibility and intelligence as the source of this intelligible form and the agent whereby it is reflected in the partial intelligibility and intelligence of the creatures which in various degree participate in form and its intelligibility. As such it is independent of any particular intelligibilities and examples of purpose. It suffices that there should be form in the universe and therefore intelligibility and finality. And this is a fact which no scientific discoveries can affect. Upon this metaphysical basis the teleological argument stands, and must always stand, firm.

Monstration from the Abstract Absolute of Truth

In the concrete, every truth is not only contingent but also partial, never true in every respect and from every point of view, in fact the half truth of half being. Nevertheless, every true judgment, however limited in the concrete is, *as such*, absolute. In so far as it is true, its truth is wholly true, valid everywhere and eternally and for all. Suppose, for example, the following statement is true: If I had not caught the bus I should have missed the last train. Objectively, as a concrete truth,

this truth is in the highest degree contingent and relative, in fact merely hypothetical. But its truthfulness, its abstract truth, is absolute. Everywhere, for all eternity and for all beings this contingent and hypothetical truth is true, absolutely true. The objective truth it enunciates, its concrete truth, is neither absolute nor unqualified. For if a passing motor had given me a lift I should have caught the train. But its abstract truth is absolute and without qualification. Thus to every contingent fact and the contingent concrete truth which it represents there is attached an absolute abstract truth. Every truth in the concrete, in its objective contents is contingent, in the abstract, in its quality of truth absolute.

Experience, therefore, presents us undeniably and self-evidently with an absolute. It is indeed an abstract, not a concrete absolute, but an absolute notwithstanding. But the concrete being to which it is attached is contingent, not absolute. If, however, the whole of concrete reality is contingent how can an absolute, even abstract, come into being? It cannot arise from a concrete reality wholly contingent. And a universe whose parts are all contingent cannot be absolute. Pr. Santayana's view that an abstract order of absolute ideas somehow enters into a wholly contingent order of concrete realities is untenable. There cannot be an order of abstract ideas suspended in the void. And were it possible, this ideal order could not enter into the concrete order unless there were some higher principle of unity comprehending both orders and making this conjunction possible. There must therefore be a concrete

Absolute, from which the abstract absolute attached to concrete contingents is derived; an Abstract Concrete Truth, the ground of truth which is absolute only in the abstract. And this concrete Absolute transcending the concrete contingents which compose the universe is what we mean by God.

On analysis the abstract truth thus attaching to concrete contingents is seen to be grounded in their form. Though the existence of a particular object or state of an object is contingent the nature of that object or state is, as such, absolute. This absoluteness is expressed by the logical axiom that A must be A , and cannot also not be A . A nature substantial or accidental is a definite ideal reality eternally and absolutely self-identical and therefore absolutely true. It need not indeed be realized. But if realized it must be what it is absolutely and without qualification. Even a merely hypothetical truth expresses something of the form of its subject matter. The proposition about losing the train expressed aspects of my action and situation and the time-schedules of the bus and train. And these formal aspects are absolute ideal realities. The universe is thus the intersection of an absolute ideal and a concrete contingent order, the composition of an ideal absolute and a concrete contingency. The former is the formal factor of finite being, the latter the concrete energy-object or state which derives its contingency from its material factor, the potential energy actuated by its form. This composition of the formal and material factors, that is of an abstract absolute and a concrete contingency, is however, explicable only as the

product of a Concrete Absolute in which form and energy are identical and which is therefore Concrete Idea, Absolute Concrete Truth.

The much debated illuminism of St. Augustine seems to me at bottom a statement of this implication of Absolute Truth in the abstract truth of all truths. As M. Gilson understands him, St. Augustine regarded a divine illumination as the source of our knowledge, not of particular concrete truths, but of their truthfulness, that is of their abstract truth. In this abstract truthfulness we apprehend an Absolute truthfulness, what I have termed an absolute abstract truth which, *in its absolute character*, implies and therefore reveals the Absolute Concrete Truth, which is God

Because God is a living superpersonal agent, an apprehension of God cannot be the apprehension of a passive object, but must be His self-revelation or illumination.¹ Hence this apprehension of abstract truth as absolute, and in this absoluteness of abstract truth, of God as the absolute concrete truth which it implies, is an illumination by this Divine Truth.

Since Kant, defenders of theism, even those who, like Cardinal Newman, have not professed the Kantian metaphysic¹ have tended to emphasize what is termed the moral argument. Whatever the precise form in which it is stated it usually involves an argument from the absolute obligation of duty, revealed in the utterances of conscience. This absolute character implies, it is argued, a Lawgiver and Ruler whose will and sanction are expressed by the absoluteness of moral

¹ cf. Max Scheler. *Das Ewige im Menschen*, pp. 350, 535.

obligation. The argument proceeds to maintain that in view of this obligation there must be a Divine Judge to reward the observance and punish the breach of moral law. This is unconvincing. If God exists he must indeed reward right and punish wrong, though the reward and punishment may be attached as inherent consequences to good and bad conduct. But the need of a sanction for morality is not a sufficient proof of God's existence. And the notion, still too popular among unthinking believers, that moral conduct is impossible without belief in God is not justified by the facts. On the other hand, the absolute obligation of moral truth is indeed a valid proof of theism. But it is not a separate proof. It is simply a particular application of the more general proof from the abstract absolute of truth. Moral truth is true and absolute in precisely the same sense as any other kind of truth and possesses no special privilege in this respect. Like all other truths, moral truths—perceptions of ethical form—are not absolute in the concrete. They are relative to an environment which need not have existed. The truth that wilful homicide is morally evil depends on the existence of human beings capable of being murdered and on the supposition that the victim is not killed in self-defence. Even the most absolute of moral truths, the twofold law of love towards God and our neighbour is contingent upon the existence of rational beings capable of loving God and one another. Only the abstract truthfulness of moral truths is *strictly* absolute, in which respect they do not differ from other truths.

This unwarranted pre-eminence ascribed to moral truths by those who imagine they possess an absolute character unshared by other kinds of truths is due to the moralism which exalts moral goodness above its peers in the hierarchy of values, beauty and speculative truth.

Were it not for this prejudice it would be recognized that there is no moral proof of theism distinct from the monstration from the formally absolute character of all truth.¹

¹ Though moral values are, as such, equal to not higher than, aesthetic and speculative, there are moral values of a higher order. These, however, are not purely ethical but also religious. They constitute the morality concerned with our directly religious conduct, our duties towards God and towards men is their *supernatural* relation to Him, a morality, therefore, which unlike the exclusively ethical morality concerned with our duties towards man as a natural being, depends for its existence upon the truth of religion and of theism.

CHAPTER III

THE PROOF FROM MAN'S NEED OF GOD

AN argument often put forward for the existence of God is Man's universal need of God witnessed by the universality of religion. Superficially considered, this argument is invalid. An explicit belief in one supreme God, Maker and Lord of the world, is not universal.

The sole record of mankind, during by far the longest portion of its history, consists of stone implements and a few bones. There is, therefore, no scientific evidence to show whether the earliest men had any religion or, if they had, what it was.¹ And whatever view we take of primitive religion, there have been, and are, groups large and small which have no belief in God. The official creed of Buddhism and Jainism is atheistic. The inhabitants of the Soviet Union—a population of some 160,000,000—are rapidly discarding religion of any kind for dialectical materialism, strictly a social energeticism. The supreme deity of the Nazis in fact, if not in word, is the German race. And the majority elsewhere have no living religion. Nor do these secularist millions appear to miss the religion they have lost. How then can we speak

¹ Obviously, for the purpose of this argument no appeal can be made to revelation. It is not even possible to *prove*, scientifically, that religion, in the wider sense, belief in some superhuman power, or powers, above man and the empirical universe has existed from the origin of the human race.

of a universal need for religion? Is not the alleged need but the need for a superhuman power on whom to rely for help and security, felt inevitably by men too uncivilized and ignorant to help or secure themselves by a scientific understanding and organization of natural forces, physical, biological, psychological and social? As the advance of science and its rational employment by an organized co-operation enables man to establish a stable and just social order and exploit the forces of nature for the common good must not religion, the product of poverty and oppression, insecurity and ignorance, perish as a superfluous illusion? In the past that illusion may have been necessary to give man the courage to persevere with his upward struggle in a strange and hostile environment. But when this necessity no longer exists, the illusion is no longer beneficial. It is, in fact, mischievous because it encourages man to look to God in vain for what only his own efforts can procure.

Here, as always, the reply is to deepen, and by deepening to purify, our understanding of religion. God does not normally provide immediately for man's temporal needs. He must supply them for himself by using the reason with which God has endowed him, to study and control a world which potentially contains in abundance the necessary sources of supply. He is referred to his own efforts—themselves, indeed, dependent upon God for their existence and exercise. Though God gives man his daily bread, He does it through man. And if man fails to do his part, the bread is not forthcoming. This seeming callousness is God's regard for

human freedom and initiative. It would not be good for man were he fed by manna from heaven. He would be less human. (There is, therefore, a sense in which man does not need God, as he was believed to need Him in more ignorant and uncivilized societies. He does not need God's special intervention to provide good things and remove evils which he can now provide and remove for himself, but which he was formerly unable to provide or remove. By sanitation he can abolish plagues, before which in the past he was helpless. He cannot, therefore, expect God's direct action to remove plague, if he fails to take the requisite sanitary measures. But this diminution in man's sense of need for God as His *immediate* temporal Saviour purifies and elicits more powerfully his genuine religious need of God, as God, of God for His own sake. This surely is another reason why God has not normally supplied man's secular needs by direct intervention. Were He to do so, He would be needed and sought primarily as the giver of man's sustenance, the loaves and fishes, not as the Giver of Himself, man's supreme beatitude. Lenin, not God, the Bolsheviks boast, gave bread. Let Lenin give bread—which without God's decree he cannot give. Man does not live by bread alone. If God gave the bread directly this truth would be forgotten. It is Caesar's province to see to it that his people have sufficient bread. Why should God relieve him of his job? But the living bread he cannot give. If the need of God is less widely felt than in the past because man is more confident of his ability to satisfy his needs, it is a proof that the apparent need of God

has been too commonly a need not of God but of secular goods which, it seemed, only God's direct action could provide. It is not religion that has proved superfluous, but an irreligious attitude to religion. If an individual or a society discards belief in God because advancing knowledge has shown natural causes at work where before He was thought to be solely and directly operative, and because the control of these causes has provided earthly goods which prayer alone does not provide, the religion of that individual or society was superficial and irreligious. The discovery that without any reference to God, or faith in Him, man can do for himself what he had thought impossible, far from disproving his need of God, should make it pure, a need not of God's gifts, not even intellectual and cultural gifts, but of God Himself.

With the majority, the enhancement of human power has, in fact, produced the opposite effect. They experience no conscious need for God. This is due to the combined action of the worldly attitude to religion which seeks God primarily or solely for the sake of earthly benefits and an exclusively secular outlook and interest. But an unconscious need is not, therefore, non-existent. A need repressed below the level of consciousness is active in the subconscious. Whatever doubts attach to detailed interpretations of psycho-analysis this, at least, is beyond dispute. Since, however, the religious need for God, for a transcendental Absolute as opposed to the need for His protection or gifts is a fundamental need of the human spirit, as religious teachers have always insisted and the experience of hosts of religious

men and women of every age, locality and creed has born consenting witness, it is indestructible. And if the effects of a secularist environment and education have driven it below the surface of consciousness it operates from the subconscious under all sorts of disguises. We all know of the repressed sex complex and its disguises. Christopher Dawson has called attention to the fact¹ that whatever sex repressions may still exist another complex is far more widely repressed in the contemporary world. It is the religion complex, the desire, the need for God. Since it belongs to a far deeper psychological level than the biologico-psychical level of sex, and since its object is nothing less than Absolute and Infinite Being, its repression must be far more disastrous; and the disguises, the substitutes in which, when repressed, it finds expression, correspondingly monstrous, powerful and destructive. For they are devised to fill a void unfathomably deeper and vaster than that left by the repression of any other human need—an abyss which only an infinite object can fill. And they are inspired and moved by the energy, the concentrated and unified energy, which is man's central volition, the energy of the human spirit seeking vital union with its Divine Source and End.

If, therefore, man does not worship the true God he will, because he must, worship an idol. An idol is a limited being, a creature invested with the absolute and therefore unlimited value of God, thus taking His place and receiving in His stead the adoration, whether formal or simply an attitude of the will, due to God

¹ *Enquiries: Christianity and Sex.*

alone. Idolatry assumes two principal forms. The Absolute Transcendent Being may be acknowledged, but His Presence confined to a finite object or class of objects. This idolatry, which may be termed relative, is the idolatry found within the sphere of religion. In so far as the image worship of pagans identifies Deity with an image or regards the image as somehow confining Its presence and operation there is genuine idolatry. Where, however, the image is regarded as simply a means or place whereby and in which a Divinity transcending the image acts and reveals its presence, this cult of the image, though it may be mistaken or unworthy, is not strictly idolatrous. This relative idolatry is rarely, if ever, explicitly formulated. The contradiction involved in identifying with the Absolute a limited and relative being would become too obvious. It is usually a vague and unformulated attitude. As such it creeps even into the purest forms of religion, leading many of their adherents to identify God with some image or more probably some notion of Him which, as such, is limited. This unconscious idolatry surrenders religion to the secularist attack. The other type of idolatry may be termed absolute. It affirms in theory or practice that a given finite being or class of beings, admittedly belonging to our empirical universe, possesses an absolute and unlimited value. If relative idolatry is a perversion of religion, absolute idolatry is a substitute for it, a pseudo-religion. There are, in fact, in the contemporary world a number of most powerful pseudo-religions, secularist substitutes for religion. There is the Nazi race idol invested with

an absolute value, and making an exclusive and unlimited claim upon the worshipper. There is the idol of Soviet Russia, the perfect Communist society; equally unlimited and exclusive in its demands. And there are other substitutes for religion. These pseudo-religions tend towards one of two forms—each the deification of a human society as the omnipotent absolute. One of these is Nationalism, the other Communism. And when, as in Russia, a particular nation is regarded as the pioneer and chosen agent of Communism, the Communist idolatry is reinforced by the Nationalist. So powerful, in fact, is the attraction of these substitute religions supported, as they are, by a State monopoly of advertisement and education, combined with the persecution of those who will not worship the triumphant idol, that they provide, for the time at least, a sufficient provision for a half-awakened and inchoate religious need and thus prevent those who are under their spell from becoming aware of its true nature, and its only genuine and permanent satisfaction. Hence this solution of the tension between the vertical and the horizontal movements of the human spirit is not followed, immediately, by the tension of an unsatisfied craving for God. The false absolute, be it the nation or the Communist society, appears a genuine absolute to spirits whose vision has been turned by their environment in the horizontal, instead of the vertical direction, and whose inlook is therefore feeble and their insight correspondingly dim. If religion has been and is abused as an opiate of the people drugging them into acquiescence in war and social wrongs, this idolatry of

human self-deification whether Nationalist or Communist *is* essentially an opiate of the human spirit, drugging it into acquiescence in the loss of God. These opiates, however, whether the abuse of true religion or humanist pseudo-religion cannot drug all men and for ever. Sooner or later their victims will shake off their fumes, purify religion, and reject idolatry. Meanwhile the power wielded by those false absolutisms, immanental and humanist substitutes for religion through the very absolutism and intolerance of their claim, is a massive witness to man's need of the Absolute, of religion therefore, and of God. Far from disproving man's need of God by the temporary and comparatively superficial satisfaction they have provided, the modern idolatries of a social humanity, whether Nationalist or Communist, by the very fact that they are idolatries, ascribe an absolute value to their human object and secure for it a corresponding religious devotion, display man's need of an absolute Object towards which he can reasonably adopt and should adopt this religious attitude of unqualified self-devotion. The man who feels no need of religion because his nation or class has taken its place proves, by his religious attitude towards this substitute, that he needs religion.

But even if man needs religion and God, how does the need prove the existence of an object to satisfy it? Must not man be content to idolize himself in one form or another, or the universe because there is, in fact, no God beyond them? Obviously the existence of a need is no proof of its actual satisfaction. Many who need

food starve. Need, however, proves the existence of a possible satisfaction, the existence either of the kind of object for which need is felt or some other kind of object which satisfies the need for which a non-existent kind of being is desired. For it is the existence of the appropriate object which provokes the desire. Had there been no sex, sexual desire would have been unknown, if no food and drink, no hunger and thirst. But no other object than God can satisfy man's religious desire. For the object of that desire is absolute and infinite being. And no object belonging to the natural universe, human or non-human, not even the universe as a whole, is absolute and unlimited.¹ Therefore the desire, the need for the absolute and the unlimited presupposes as its explanation and cause the only being absolute and unlimited, namely God. Where this need is fully conscious of its own nature, as the need for an Absolute value, it produces an acute and powerful dissatisfaction with the limited and contingent objects of man's empirical experience and the universe to which they and man himself belong. It was such a profound realization of the unreality and worthlessness of all these things, and *by comparison* with God's Absolute Being they are unreal and worthless, which as we have seen, was the substance of Buddha's enlightenment. Thus the religion of Buddha represents an apprehension of the Absolute Value ex-

¹ Even if the universe were infinite in material extent, which is incapable of scientific proof or disproof but is metaphysically impossible, it is obviously limited in other respects.

plicitly negative in character. For it is an apprehension of the lack of value in all being that is not absolute. But it is implicitly positive, an apprehension of that Absolute Value which alone displays by contrast the worthlessness of all besides.¹ It is an apprehension of Absolute as the negation of contingent, reality and value, implicit in and presupposed by the negative apprehension, of the infinite, as the negation of the finite, of God, as the negation of creatures, revealed in and, apparently, as the perception of their nothingness. And this profound experience of man's need for the Absolute, a need experienced so powerfully that everything besides loses its value, involves an obscure sense of the presence of its Object. And this presence is more obvious when an equal or more powerful need is experienced for the Absolute conceived positively, as it is conceived by the Vedantist, the Sufi, or the Christian mystic.

Since the experience of need for God is thus inextricably bound up with an experience of God, as its cause and satisfaction, the argument from man's need for God cannot be sharply distinguished from the appeal to man's concrete religious experience of God of which that need is an aspect. It cannot therefore be grouped with the metaphysical proofs. No abstract knowledge that there exists a transcendent Absolute, pre-eminently containing all created value and being, can satisfy man's need for God. At most it can only

¹ It is indeed a comparative not an absolute worthlessness. But in the light of Absolute Value this comparative worthlessness is apt to seem complete.

make him aware of its true nature and implications and perhaps intensify it, as the description of a beautiful country might whet the desire to visit it. Man needs a concrete experience of the Absolute Godhead, vital union with Him as the Absolute super-energy. This cannot be provided by metaphysics and its monstrations of God's existence. Not only is the knowledge of God which these monstrations produce abstract and conceptual, they leave us ignorant whether a personal communion is possible with this infinitely superpersonal God. But it is precisely this personal communion which religion requires. And without it man's religious need cannot be satisfied.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROOF OF THEISM FROM RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

IF the proofs of theism are to meet the objections brought against them, they cannot be stated simply. Their metaphysical foundations must be examined. This, however, demands a metaphysical attitude of mind which our positivist environment does not foster. When metaphysics are regarded as intellectual trifling, the subtle weaving of mental cobwebs, the monstrations of theism, being profoundly metaphysical, cannot convince. For they are understood too superficially and so understood are unconvincing. If, for example, the first Cause is understood as the first of a series of causes of the same kind and on the same level it must be denied. For a first cause of this kind is inconceivable, and not what is meant by the First Cause. Moreover, these metaphysical monstrations are abstract and therefore appear unreal to minds unused to abstract thinking. They are thus in practice insufficient to produce a living faith in God among the majority of mankind.

It is not enough for religion that God should exist. Man must be able to enter into a personal relationship with Him. And although the monstrations of theism prove that the Absolute Being is superpersonal, more not less than personality, as we know it, they do not prove that a personal communion is

possible between God and man. God is also super-animal, for He possesses pre-eminently the consciousness of the beasts. But their consciousness is of so low an order that communion is impossible between God and the animals. An animal cannot be religious. Nor does the fact that man can arrive at the knowledge that God, an Absolute Being, super-personal and super-spiritual and transcendent of the universe, exists, prove the possibility of a personal relationship with God. It might seem likely *a priori*, that the transcendence of this Absolute Being precluded such a relationship. That is to say, although these metaphysical monstrations establish the existence of God they do not prove that He is the God of the religious believer, a God that satisfies man's religious need. No doubt, being better than man's highest conception of goodness, He must be willing to manifest His love to man. But so far as these philosophical arguments can inform us, the infinite distance between man and Himself may render personal relationship between them an intrinsic impossibility. Religion, however, cannot exist without personal communion between man and God.

At this point religious experience supplements the metaphysical monstrations of God's existence. It is an immediate and concrete apprehension of God, and is an experience *sui generis*, as distinctive as æsthetic or ethical experience. Though normally coloured with emotion, it is not an emotion, a sentiment, and since the term feeling is ambiguous and suggests emotion, it is inadvisable and misleading to call religious experience feeling. It is as much the in-

tuition of an objective reality as æsthetic intuition or the speculative intuitions of science or metaphysics. Its subject is the central core of the human spirit, the root of intellect and will. If its Object is obscure this is partly because it is a concrete not an abstract intuition, but chiefly because its Infinite Object transcends the images and concepts whereby we know finite beings. Moreover, whereas the objects of all other intuitions are forms more or less completely and clearly abstracted from the energy-objects to which they belong, the Divine Object of religious experience is a unity of form and energy. The intuition of God as the Absolute Form is but one aspect of religious experience. It is bound up with a vital, more strictly a supervital, union with God as the Absolute Energy. And since we cannot see God clearly, the latter aspect, union with God by the centre of the soul, as the root of volition predominates over the former, intuition of God by the centre, as the root of cognition. Religious experience is a dark touch of the Absolute Being we cannot imagine or conceive.

Indeed, this contact is most commonly so obscure that its Object is apprehended but as an infinite Something, an unknown, and in the lowest form of religious experience is indistinguishable from the context within which it is apprehended, the depth of the soul or the external universe. And the positive awareness of God may be disguised as a negative apprehension of the vanity, and (comparative) unreality of all things finite. The abstract knowledge of God and of the relation of the universe to Him given by the meta-

physical monstrations is therefore an invaluable supplement to the concrete but obscure intuition of religious experience. And both types of apprehension, the abstract and metaphysical and the concrete and religious, are often found together. The former illuminates the latter, the latter imparts substance and force to the former.

But we do not depend for our *Religious* knowledge of God upon personal experience. We can and must accept the witness borne by the religious experience of others, in particular of those men and women of profound religious insight whose experience of God is exceptionally powerful and distinct.

The argument for an historic revelation cannot be discussed in this essay.

Any such revelation must be a special and supreme case of the general revelation and witness of God in religious experience. For only in the religious experience of a revealer or revealers could it be made.

In its more obscure forms religious experience, for all its concreteness and force, is not yet the consciousness of communion with God as with another person. But there are forms of religious experience in which the subject is clearly aware of this personal relationship. And the more obscure experience must be interpreted by the clearer. Religious experience, therefore, not only supplements by its concreteness the abstraction of philosophic theism, it proves the possibility of personal communion with God.

But though a personal, and in its clearer forms, a consciously personal communion with God, religious

experience, and the more powerfully as union with God advances in intimacy and perfection, is a concrete realization of the transcendence whereby not only is God the "wholly other, never so like to creatures but that He is far more unlike them," but so infinitely superpersonal that He can be termed personal only by analogy.

It thus corrects the inevitable anthropomorphism with which, in the more primitive stages of religious thought, man interprets his religion on the model of his secular experience.

We must carefully distinguish between religious experience and its imaginative or conceptual translation. Since the soul is one, a psychological function is accompanied in its exercise by others. The religious apprehension of God by the centre of the spirit does not usually occur in isolation from the more superficial functions of thought and feeling nor even from the more superficial functioning of the imagination and the memory which reproduces sensible images. And when the central apprehension is dim these concomitant psychoses overlay it, so that it is not easy to isolate it and recognize its true nature.

These images and concepts may be merely concomitant upon the religious experience, aroused by its impact from a mass of concepts and images dormant in the subconscious, but without any intrinsic and rational connection with it. They deform and misrepresent the experience into which they are imported. If the latter is obscure the subject is apt to confuse them with the experience itself. And

the society to which he belongs may encourage this mistake by a false identification of the exterior with the interior of religious experience. If, owing to the subject's sensitive psychophysical constitution a religious experience is accompanied by abnormal phenomena, even if these are pathological—and if the experience is powerful and the subject's nervous equilibrium easily unbalanced this is likely to happen—these phenomena are often accepted by an unscientific individual or society, as part of the religious experience and thus of divine origin. And the mistake is the easier because such phenomena, even definitely morbid, may accompany religious apprehensions of high value.

That the doctrines of the religious community to which the subject of religious experience belongs should be employed by him to provide a conceptual interpretation by fitting it into the context of his beliefs is inevitable, and when these doctrines are true, beneficial. But they may equally well misinterpret the experience they are employed to explain. We cannot therefore condemn an alleged religious experience as illusory because its conceptual and imaginary interpretation, its translation into images and concepts, is unacceptable, or because it is accompanied by valueless or even morbid psychophysical phenomena. Even if the substance remaining, when these accidents have been stripped from it, the religious experience itself, presents little distinct content, it is, nevertheless, an apprehension of the fundamental Subject-Object of religion, the Godhead, and thus a testimony to the existence of its Divine Object.

The conceptual interpretation of a religious experience, or even its translation into images, though its material is always a pre-existing store of ideas and images may, however, be directly determined by the experience itself as the best selection which could be made from that store, not indeed to convey the substance of the experience which, being an experience of the Absolute, infinitely exceeds concepts and images, but to relate it with the experience of the subject as a whole and with his mental and social environment.

Since there is no proportion between the concepts, still less the images, and the experience they interpret, and since the former are necessarily derived from sources alien to the religious experience, and on lower planes of reality, even here the interpretation, is in part, imported from without. The religious experience, however, determines to a greater degree what concepts and images shall be introduced for its service.

We may picture the conceptual factor in the concrete religious experience as its body, the imaginary factor, and whether this is obviously subjective or apparently objective, since it depends on psychophysical causes, is of no consequence, as its clothing.

Although a man may be stripped naked, while he lives, his soul cannot be divested of his body. So it is with religious experience. It may be divested of any imaginary garment, purely mental. But it can never find expression without a conceptual embodiment, be it only the judgment that its Object is nothing conceivable, because more than anything conceivable, is a supreme Value, an Absolute Reality. Religious percep-

tion alone apprehends the religious factor in the experience of another. "Abyss calleth to abyss", and where access to the abyss has been closed by a rationalist environment and education the call is unheard. Under these circumstances only the conceptual body, with or without an imaginary garment, can be apprehended.

The irreligious man confronted with a religious experience, is like a dog that sees its master kneel in prayer. It observes the bodily gesture but knows nothing of its meaning. Happily the analogy is imperfect. That an animal should apprehend a human religious experience is an intrinsic impossibility, founded in the limitation of its nature. But the irreligious man is naturally capable of apprehending religious experience. The obstacle is not intrinsic but external, and therefore in principle, if not always in practice, surmountable. If the soul of religious experience is not perceived the conceptual body must seem a corpse. This, in fact, is the view of religion taken by the millions whose spiritual eye has never been opened, whose centre is imprisoned by anti-religious prejudices so that it cannot communicate with the more superficial levels of the soul and its experience. This imprisonment of the soul's central depth, with its special contact with the Divine Absolute and hunger for union with Him cannot indeed be complete. The unity of the soul makes this impossible. But its existence and action do not come into clear consciousness and make themselves felt only by devious routes and in disguised forms. Hence the religious value given to Communism in Russia, to Nationalism elsewhere.

The soul of a religious experience being thus distinct from its conceptual body, we cannot estimate the reality or degree of the former by the latter. No doubt religious experience, when powerful and of a high order, increasingly tends to mould its body, that is to determine its conceptual expression. Hence the similarity between the conceptual account of their experience given by mystics of diverse cultures and creeds. Compelled by his religious experience, the atheist, Richard Jefferies uses the language of the monk "Dionysius". But an erroneous philosophy or theology may so stunt or distort the conceptual body that it is a defective or perverted expression of its soul. When, for example, the experience of Absolute Reality reveals the comparative unreality of creatures, theopanism, as in Advaita Vedanta, misrepresents this experience as an experience of their absolute unreality.

In the highest degrees of mystical experience the soul is united so intimately with God and participates so fully in His self-consciousness communicated to her that, as Christian mystics of undoubted orthodoxy bear witness, her self-consciousness is from time to time obliterated by this God-consciousness and she *seems* identical with God. Though this is but a temporary experience on the way to the goal, self-consciousness in God-consciousness, when the soul is aware of her separate being in God's knowledge of it, a false theology misinterprets it as the experience of an actual identity between God and the soul. But even where thus misinterpreted, the experience is genuine, and must not be rejected because the interpretation is un-

acceptable. To reject religious experience because of defects in its conceptual interpretation is like denying an artist's aesthetic insight because his technique is deficient or because the limitations of his school make it impossible for him to express his insight as adequately as he would otherwise have done.

On the contrary we should expect religious experience even in the most unlikely quarters. Theists should not readily believe that God has left Himself without witness among those who, through no personal fault, lack an explicit faith in His existence, capable of conceptual formulation, that those who deny Him because he has meant nothing more than an arbitrary despot beyond the clouds, dope for the victims of social injustice, or the sanction of mass murder are therefore "cut away from His hand". As Pr. Karrer observes: "Many who blaspheme God love Him".¹

Throughout the world, if we will look below the surface, religious experience, even in the strangest disguises, testifies to God's presence and action in the human soul, and utters its *Amen* to St. Augustine's cry: "Thou hast made us for thyself and our heart cannot rest until it rests in Thee".

Although the pure religious experience is as such inexpressible, we approach it most nearly through the conceptual expressions most directly determined by it. Though we never see the soul apart from the body, we approach it far nearer as expressed by the voice or the eyes than by the stomach or backbone.

These more immediate and intrinsic expressions of

¹ *Religions of Mankind.*

religious experience are of various kinds. There are psychological effects, awe, adoration, exultation. There is a more negative effect, perception of the worthlessness of all things created, of the subject himself, and this may assume an ethical colour and become a keen sense of sin in the presence of the All Holy. This ethical factor, however, is an importation from the sphere of moral experience, not given in the religious experience as such. Or there may be simply the perception, that the Absolute is nothing that can be grasped. Here conceptual interpretation is at a minimum, confined to the negative relation affirmed between what is conceivable and the Incomprehensible.

As Professor Otto has pointed out, the mystery apprehended by religious experience possesses a twofold aspect. It is terrifying, awful, the *mysterium tremendum*. But it is also fascinating, the *mysterium fascinans*.

The occasions and channels on and through which the Presence of this awful and fascinating mystery is apprehended differ widely. It was in the storm that the Psalmist experienced the awful Majesty of Yahweh. The mystic finds the Mystery in the depth of his own soul, a presence so intimate that it has often been confused with the soul itself. Holy places, things, and persons, ceremonies, sacraments, symbols, images, temples, churches, and shrines, priests, prophets, saints—all these are points of contact with Godhead, sanctuaries where He manifests His presence. Even where these sacred objects or persons are unworthy, or foster unworthy beliefs about the Divine Nature, for

lack of worthier channels, they bring God to those who use them in ignorant good faith. Nature also is a temple in which God may be experienced. The nature mystic experiences a Divine Presence pervading nature. Here, however, the danger of pantheistic misinterpretation is particularly great. The nature mystic too often regards the Deity which he apprehends in nature as wholly immanent, the soul of which nature is the body. Religion, however, requires, and religious experience reveals, a God who essentially transcends nature.

Moreover, since religious experience is in this life primarily supervital union with God as the incomprehensible superenergy, its subject is primarily the centre of the soul as the root of the will, rather than as the root of the intelligence. For the will is the spiritual energy of the soul. Therefore a right direction of the will, love, is indispensable, a right understanding, knowledge, of secondary importance.

Even in the natural order the ground of the soul is obscurely aware of the God in whom its being is rooted, and who is there intimately present. But this natural consciousness of God is so dim that it cannot distinguish its object.¹

This natural contact between the soul and God is like contact with an object in pitch darkness, when we are conscious of something there but are totally unable to make out its nature. And even when this dim awareness, implied in the fundamental consciousness of the soul, is supplemented by an awareness of the Absolute in nature, as in the experience of the nature mystic the

¹ Perè Picard, s. 7 *La Saisie Imédiate de Dieu dans les États Mystiques*.

Absolute Being apprehended is never, on the natural plane of experience, clearly distinguishable from its vehicle.

This is why the nature mystic, unaided by a sound philosophy or theology, interprets his experience in a purely immanental and pantheistic sense.

There is, however, a higher union between man and God, union on a superior plane, which, though hidden in its lower degrees, becomes increasingly conscious as it advances. In its higher and completely conscious manifestations it is clearly distinguishable from the lower type of religious experience. And the true nature of its own inferior and, as yet subconscious, degrees is disclosed by the fully conscious experiences of its more perfect development. The flower discloses the nature of its seed.

These manifestations are described in the records of mystical experience as they come to us from mystics of all countries and many creeds. They leave no doubt of the utter transcendence of their object—its complete Otherness, wholly distinct from any finite object or the universe as a whole. The only pantheistic misinterpretation still possible is not strictly pantheism but theopanism. Neither world nor the empirical self is confused with the Divine Object of this experience. But their comparative unreality is misinterpreted as absolute and God alone declared real.

This apprehension of the Absolute Transcendence is accompanied by a union with the Divine Mystery, so intimate, that the nuptial symbolism which scandalizes so many religious people to-day, becomes almost

inevitable. For the physical contact and union of sex, the most perfect vital union between two energy objects on the biological level, is far less intimate and perfect than this supervital union between the Divine Superenergy, the absolute Spirit and the spiritual energy object, the soul. This union is a progressive reception of God and therefore of His Operation which is Himself in the centre of the soul and its fundamental functions. The Godhead received in the ground of the soul communicates Himself to the intellect as His self-knowledge, to the will as His self-love. To the end this communicated self-knowledge is obscure, manifest only as the dark apprehension of a faith which receives it as a mystery beyond understanding. The communicated self-love is charity in the will. Only in the final earthly perfection of this union is the operation of the intellect and will, at any time a pure reception of God's knowledge and love. Before this when the work of purification from self-will is incomplete the reception is more or less confined to the roots of these basic functions. Their actual operations still proceed largely from the principle of a self-affirmation subdued, but not destroyed, by the Divine Action. The self is still a self-hood which resists and restricts God's action and self-donation, not a selfless self which is their pure receptacle. Only a minute handful in this life reach this final stage, this most perfect earthly union, which Catholic mystics term the transforming union or spiritual marriage.

For the vast majority, even of God's faithful servants, the purification necessary for its attainment is not

accomplished here but is reserved, we must conclude, for a purgatorial state after death.

This union and the experience of it are evidently supernatural in the sense that the subject is raised above the level of nature and is united most intimately with the Transcendent God. Catholic theology, however, teaches that God has called man to a strictly supernatural union with Himself, supernatural in the sense that it exceeds the nature of any possible creature, and must be the gift of God's free grace. For it is a participation in the life of God Himself, therefore of the Divine nature. "We are made partakers of the Divine nature". The principle of this new supernatural life is the Holy Spirit indwelling our souls by grace, and communicating His supernatural gifts of faith, hope, and charity. But the union with God experienced by the transcendental mystic, as its nature is revealed in its most perfect development, is the manifestation of such a supernatural union with God. Here precisely is revealed the progressive occupation of the soul's fundamental functions by the Divine Action, which by faith and charity effects the supernatural sanctification of the soul. We are therefore justified in concluding that the transcendental union—intuition of God, manifest in mystical experience, is the revelation to consciousness of this supernatural life and union.

In this experience the soul is aware of God, not merely as He is present in her centre in virtue of its natural profundity and spirituality, but as He is present and operative in it in virtue of its elevation to the supernatural order. At first this supernatural presence and

operation are buried in the subconscious. There is but the awareness of a presence seemingly passive.¹ Later the soul becomes increasingly conscious of the Divine operation. Throughout the intellect receives God's self-knowledge by faith, His self-love by charity—the latter including His love of His creatures. These virtues rise above the threshold of consciousness as their invasion and transformation of the soul's functions become more perfect. Transcendental mysticism is thus the manifestation, the conscious experience of a union with God supernatural and supervital. The seed of that union is what theology terms sanctifying grace, a quality with which God invests the soul to make it capable of His supernatural indwelling. Its bud is mystical experience; in the transforming union, on the verge of opening. Its unfolded blossom, though this is beyond the evidence of religious experience, is the open vision of heaven. The life of the spiritual plant is charity, the reception of God's Love, His Holy spirit. Its consciousness is faith—at first a dim subconsciousness, later a powerful awareness of transcendent and inexpressible Reality—hereafter to be its open vision, but throughout the reception of God's knowledge, His Wisdom and Word.

The substance of this progressive supernatural union is the union with God by love of the soul as a spiritual energy, a will. Upon this the intuition of that union is concomitant. And the intuition does not advance in equal step with the union. Temperament, psycho-physical structure, the effects of environment and preconceived ideas hasten or retard the intuitional

¹ Perè Picard, *op. cit.*

aspect of the vital union. There are transparent and opaque natures. In the former the apprehension of the centre penetrates with comparative ease to the surface of consciousness. In the latter penetration is difficult and slow. Since transcendent mystical experience is the intuition of a union which is the effect of supernatural grace, and every increase in that union is the effect of grace, the experience, the intuition of the union depends for its existence on the work of supernatural grace. But this dependence is indirect, not immediate. Though the union and its degree are the work of grace, the apprehension of them depends on natural conditions. In as much as mystical experience is the awareness of the union of charity at a given degree of its growth it is the gift of grace. That this degree of union is consciously apprehended by its subject is due to natural causes. The degree in which God's self-knowledge is possessed by the intellect, the degree of faith, is indeed the gift of grace. But the conscious awareness of this supernatural faith-knowledge is conditioned by natural factors. *A* may possess a more powerful faith than *B*, that is a fuller communication of the Divine self-knowledge. But if his nature is more opaque, *A*'s awareness of this more powerful and more perfect faith may be less than *B*'s of his weaker and more imperfect. Indeed except for the dim subconscious awareness of a Divine Presence common to all human souls, he may even be unconscious of this supernatural grasp of God by faith, despite its strength and massiveness.

The progressive stages of the mystical way with the

purification effected by the progress of the mystical union represent clearly a progressive union with God and a progressive occupation of the soul by His presence and action. And this is precisely the progressive deification of the soul by supernatural grace, whose goal for Christian theology is the perfect union of heaven. Therefore, it would seem progress in holiness must find expression in a mystical experience progressing *pari passu*. It would also seem to follow that no one can attain holiness, a high degree of union with God, without mystical experience, nor its supreme measure, the highest degree of union with God, without the supreme mystical experience, the transforming union. But supreme sanctity has, in fact, been achieved, so far the evidence permits us to conclude, without the transforming union and even, it would appear, without any mystical experience. On the view here taken the difficulty can be solved. The essence of mystical experience and its progressive development, the union with God corresponds with, and depends upon, holiness and its growth. For holiness is union of the will with God by love and the mystical union is a union with God, or rather a reception of God in, and by, the centre of the soul as the root of volition and by the will as it arises from the centre as a fundamental determination of the subject's entire attitude. Since, however, the intuitional factor of mystical experience the consciousness of this union, and therefore of the action in the soul of God thus intimately united with it, is *ex hypothesi* determined by natural causes it does not depend, like the union itself, on the degree of holiness attained.

Under unfavourable conditions of temperament or environment supreme sanctity and therefore the summit of mystical union could, in principle, be reached without any mystical intuition, though it may be doubted whether this has in fact occurred. And where these conditions are particularly favourable the subject may be conscious of God's union and action at a very early stage in their development, may possess mystical intuition where the degree of mystical union is low.

This is not the place to discuss, in detail, mystical experience and the stages of its development. My purpose is rather to invoke its testimony, as the most powerful and unmistakable form of religious experience, to the existence of its Object. A man may fall in love with a woman who exists only in his imagination, literally if he is insane, too often such as he conceives her. But there could be no love of any woman, if women and sex union did not exist. Nor could religious experience exist unless God, its Divine Object, existed. Here, also, there are illusions, aberrations in which a strictly religious attitude is adopted towards a creature invested with the Absolute value of God, be it nature, an individual or a totalitarian state. And an inadequate or unworthy vessel may, by ignorant devotion, be identified with the Deity it conveys. But these aberrations presuppose the existence of the true God as the aberrations of sex presuppose the existence of the sexes and their union.

If we refuse the testimony of any form of human experience we must refuse the testimony of all. There is no escape from absolute scepticism. Sensible ex-

perience, the intuition by the mind of outer forms given in and through sense stimuli; speculative knowledge scientific and metaphysical, the intuition or intellection of abstract forms outer or inner (in metaphysics of inner forms alone); moral experience, the intuition of moral values; aesthetic intuition, the intuition of outer forms as significant of inner—all these categories of experience and their varieties must be accepted if we are to accept experience as a whole. How then can we refuse to accept the highest form of experience, religious experience of the Absolute Being transcending the half being of creatures? For this experience as described by the worldwide evidence of those who have possessed it proves it an experience *sui generis* which can no more be reduced to any other category of experience or stated in its terms than aesthetic intuition, for example, can be reduced to or stated in terms of speculative. An historic revelation such as Christianity claims to be, is often the source of belief in God—whose existence is held to be attested by its character and credentials, as a man's existence and character are attested by letters received from him.

But a religious system may also produce faith in God by the religious experience it has occasioned in those who have accepted it from childhood. In this case the ground of belief is not that, since this religion is superhuman, there must be a God to account for it, but rather the fact that in and through this religion accepted as coming from God, the individual has had religious experience of Him, together with the witness borne by the religious experience of other believers.

It is with a profound dissatisfaction that I conclude this discussion of the concrete proof of theism from religious experience in general, and in particular from its highest, most massive and most compelling form, supernatural and transcendental mystical experience. For its strength could be presented only by an accumulation of instances drawn from every age and country. And this would be the material of another book. The evidence collected by students of primitive religion, the canonical and uncanonical writings of the great historical religions, the Jewish and the Christian scriptures and the voluminous records of their experience left by mystics of every creed, in particular by the Christian mystics, would be laid under contribution. Nor could we neglect the religious experiences of men and women, not perhaps in the strict sense mystics, for example, the records of religious conversion utilized by William James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. The weight of all this testimony would be overwhelming. Even such insoluble difficulties as those presented by the problem of suffering and triumphant sin cannot invalidate this vast positive witness to the supreme Reality of God. But it is one thing to confront the atheist or the agnostic with this evidence, quite another to ask him to take it on trust. The former is impossible here, the latter useless. What I have attempted is to indicate the existence of this experimental proof of theism and invite the sceptic to study it. Evidence far more than sufficient is easily accessible.

The theism to which this experience testifies, when

taken as a whole, combines the partial truths of less adequate views of ultimate reality. With pantheism religious experience finds the Absolute immanent in the world and in the human soul, with theopanism it apprehends the Absolute as the sole perfect reality in comparison with which all other reality is unreal. With common sense it admits the subordinate and imperfect reality of creatures. With agnosticism it proclaims that the Absolute is incomprehensible and inconceivable, in this sense unknowable. With the simple believer it knows Him in the intimacy of love. Not the most brutal realism nor the most hardened cynicism could be more convinced of the extent and power of evil, no idealism more secure of the supremacy and final triumph of good. Thus experimental theism perceives the reconciliation of antinomies which human reason cannot reconcile, the solution of enigmas which human knowledge cannot solve. In the impenetrable darkness of the Absolute mystery it finds the light which illuminates the darkness in which all experience and all knowledge end. For that Darkness is the excess of Light inaccessible, the Light which is the source of every illumination of reason and knowledge, the Light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world.

If it is the mark of the truly scientific mind to stand open to all the evidence, excluding none *a priori*, because it does not fit a preconceived hypothesis, it is unscientific to reject this evidence of theism unexamined or explain it away. The report of those who have explored the depth of human experience has as much

claim to be heard as the report of those who explore its breadth. No interpretation of experience which does not admit both can be adequate to the experience it would explain. A scientific body refused to accept the report of a meteorite because stones cannot fall from the sky. It is equally irrational to refuse the report of God's Presence and Work because He cannot exist. An adequate philosophy accepts all the facts, and God is the Supreme Fact. The beginning of all that is knowable, He is the end of all knowledge. Pursue thought to the last ultimacies of being and you find the God made known by metaphysical monstration. Pursue concrete experience to its ultimate depth and you find the God of religious experience. And both are the one God proclaimed by theism. From God we have our being, by God we live and know and act, in God our thought and our desire come to rest. And in His temple we dwell. For its forecourt is the world, its Holy Place the sanctuary of His worship, its Holy of Holies the soul in whose centre He reveals His presence. Let us not walk in these holy places blindfold. Rather let us open our eyes to the glory of the veiled Presence proclaimed by such a vast chorus of consenting witness. So shall we fulfil the highest human function by whose performance mankind is the world's priesthood—to adore the God who made man and the world for His glory, which also is our perfection, our happiness and our peace.

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